THE CURTAIN;

OR AN

Impartial History

OF THE

English Stage;

digested

From the most Undoubted Authorities.

"VELUTI · IN · SPECULUM."

London:

Published by J. S. JORDAN, N. 166, Fleet Street.

1797.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A COMPENDIOUS

HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH STAGE,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

CONTAINING

A CANDID ANALYSIS OF ALL

DRAMATIC WRITINGS,

A LIBERAL AND IMPARTIAL CRITICISM ON THE MERITS OF

THEATRICAL PERFORMERS,

AND

A SKETCH OF THE LIVES OF SUCH AS HAVE BEEN EMINENT IN THEIR PROFESSION.

By WALDRON, DIBDIN, &c.

LONDON:

Printed for J. S. JORDAN, No. 166, Fleet-ſtreet,

By J. S. Barr, Brydges-ſtreet, Covent-Garden.

MDCCC.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

DRAMATIC Compoſitions, ſays Colley Cibber, have ever been eſteemed among the greateſt productions of human genius; and the public repreſentation of them, has always been countenanced by poliſhed nations as ſerviceable to the cauſe of virtue. Few pleaſures indeed are more rational than thoſe derivable from the performance of a well-written drama; and its utility in enforcing the precepts of morality has been admitted time immemorial;—but the Stage has had ſo many able advocates and defenders that it is unneceſſary to enlarge on thoſe points.

On a ſubject ſo intereſting, public curioſity has always been powerfully excited; and the hiſtory of the Stage, the Lives of Performers, the Biography of Dramatic Authors, and criticiſm on their productions, have been ſought for with avidity: in ſome degree to gratify that curioſity was the preſent little work undertaken;—volumes indeed,

indeed, have been written on the ſubject, but many of them too extenſive for general utility: here, however, the reader will find a conciſe, but we hope correct hiſtory, or "annals," of the Theatre;—a rapid, but a candid analyſis of all dramatic writings, eſpecially thoſe of more recent date;—a liberal and impartial ſtatement of the merits of new candidates for theatrical fame; and a ſketch of the lives of ſuch performers as have been diſtinguiſhed for excellence in their profeſſion.

The preſent work may be conſidered as a ſort of *Dramatic Vade Mecum*, ſerving to refreſh the memory of the frequenters of the Theatte, and aſſiſting occaſionally to correct miſtakes that may occur in converſation on dramatic ſubjects.—With theſe views, and under theſe impreſſions, it is offered to the Public, with a conſciouſneſs that no induſtry has been omitted in endeavouring to render it worthy their notice; and it is carried down to the lateſt period poſſible, as it includes the ſtate of the Theatres at the commencement of the year 1800.

A N

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

ENGLISH STAGE.

THEATRICAL amuſements were introduced very early into England; they were mentioned by William Fitz-Stephen, in his *Deſcriptio nobiliſſimæ civitatis Lundonæ*, written about the year 1170: he ſays, that London, inſtead of common Interludes belonging to the theatre, has plays of a more holy ſubject; repreſentations of thoſe miracles which the holy confeſſors wrought, or of the ſufferings wherein the glorious conſtancy of the martyrs did appear. Theſe continued a long time after to be the only ſubjects for the drama; and The Heavenly Father — Our bleſſed Saviour — The Virgin Mary — The Twelve Apoſtles, &c. were the leading characters. In 1378, a petition was preſented by the ſcholars of St. Paul's ſchool to king Richard II, beſeeching him to prohibit ſome improper perſons from preſenting the ſacred hiſtories, the clergy having been at great expences in their preparation for it againſt the enſuing Chriſtmas.

In 1390, the pariſh clerks, or clergy of London, played interludes at the Skinner's Well, near Clerkenwell; they continued three days: king Richard, his queen, and many nobles were preſent.

In 1409, the clerks performed at Skinner's Well, a play of the Creation of the World, which laſted longer than the creation itſelf; it having occupied eight days: the principal nobility and gentry compoſing the audience.

Theſe ſacred pieces were denominated Myſteries, and were ſucceeded by a ſpecie of the drama, named Moralities; the ſenſes, paſſions, virtues and vices, perſonified, conſtituting the characters: theſe contained ſome dawnings of poetry, wit, and humour, and were ſucceeded by comedies. Gammar Gurton's Needle, written by Dr. Still, and printed in 1551, is the earlieſt Engliſh piece deſerving the title of a comedy. Ferrex and Porrex; or, Gorboduc, a tragedy, written by Thomas Sackville, afterwards Lord Buckhurſt, and Thomas Norton, was acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1561, and ſhortly after printed.

The players at firſt were prieſts and ſcholars; afterwards retainers to noblemen; and, at length incorporated under royal authority; reſtricted and protected by acts of parliament.

Until the Reſtoration all the parts were perſonated by men or boys; at which period Mrs. Hughs, in the character of Deſdemona, in Othello (unleſs Mrs. Saunderſon, afterwards Mrs. Betterton, may claim priority), was the firſt female who appeared in a regular drama.

The ſtage decorations were formerly very homely; a piece of old tapeſtry ſerving for the ſcene: the ſtage was ſtrewed with ruſhes; and the actors dreſſes

dreſſes made of buckram or baize, ornamented with lacquered leather In our ancient theatres, the prices of admiſſion were ſo low as two-pence; afterwards the ſeats were ſixpence, a ſhilling, and the higheſt, for a long time, two ſhillings and ſixpence. Some of the audience ſat on ſtools upon the ſtage, drank wine or beer, cracked nuts, or ſmoked tobacco during the performance.

The Myſteries were repreſented in churches, and on the ſabbath; which practice probably continued after profane ſubjects had been introduced; playing in churches being reſtrained by Biſhop Bonner, in 1542, but the acting of plays on the ſabbath continued till the reign of King Charles I. The players generally began to act at three o'clock in the afternoon, that their performances might be ended whilſt it was day-light.

That the ſtage-decorations before the Reſtoration were extremely ſimple may be inferred from ſome ancient frontiſpieces to plays; wherein, inſtead of a ſcene, are ſeveral curtains in the front, divided by columns; the ſpaces between which ſerved the actors for their entrance and retirings, drawing aſide the curtains for that purpoſe. The ſides of the ſtage, as well as ſometimes the front, were hung with tapeſtry; there being no places of entrance there till the introduction of ſcenery. Early in Queen Elizabeth's reign the eſtabliſhed players of London began to act in temporary theatres, conſtructed in the yards of inns; and about the year 1570, it is imagined, one or two regular play-houſes were erected: the theatre in Blackfriars, and that in Whitefriars, were certainly built before 1580.

In 1574, Queen Elizabeth granted a licence to James Burbage, probably the father of the celebrated tragedian, and four others, ſervants to the Earl of Leiceſter, to exhibit all kinds of ſtage-plays, during pleaſure, in any part of England; "as well for the recreation of her loving ſubjects, as for her own ſolace and pleaſure when ſhe ſhould think good to ſee them:" and in 1583, at the earneſt requeſt of Sir Francis Walſingham, twelve of the principal comedians of that time, among whom were Thomas Wilſon, and the famous Richard Tarleton, were ſelected from the companies then ſubſiſting under the licence and protection of various noblemen; who were ſworn her Majeſty's ſervants, and allowed wages and liveries as grooms of the chamber; a cuſtom which continued till the time of Colley Cibber.

It may not be impertinent here to memoriſe a noble reply of that great ſtateſman to ſome who, to inſinuate themſelves into his favour, adviſed that a ſatirical comedy, called The Play of the Cards, ſhould be forbidden, becauſe it was ſomewhat too plain; but Sir Francis would not interdict it: ſaying, "It was fit that they who do what they ſhould not, ſhould hear what they would not."

The moſt ancient Engliſh play-houſes, of which any account has been found, are, the play-houſe in *Blackfriars*, that in *Whitefriars*. *The Theatre*, the ſituation of which has not been aſcertained, and *The Curtain*, in Shoreditch. *The Theatre*, from its name, was probably the firſt building erected in or near the metropolis pupoſely for ſcenic exhibitions. In Shakſpeare's time, there were ſeven principal theatres; *The Globe*, on the Bank-ſide; *The Curtain*, in Shoreditch; *The Red Bull*, at the upper

per end of St. John's-ſtreet; and *The Fortune*, in Whitecroſs-ſtreet. The two laſt were frequented chiefly by citizens.

For theſe ſeven theatres there were but ſix ſets of comedians; the play-houſe in *Blackfriars*, and *The Globe*, belonging to the ſame company.

Beſides theſe ſeven theatres, there were for ſome time on the Bank-ſide three other public theatres; *The Swan*, *The Roſe*, and *The Hope*; but *The Hope* being uſed chiefly as a Bear-garden, and *The Swan* and *The Roſe* having fallen to decay early in the reign of King James I. they ought not to be enumerated with the other regular theatres.

All the plays of Shakſpeare appear to have been performed either at *The Globe*, or at the theatre in *Blackfriars*; which latter one was ſituated near where the preſent apothecaries-hall now ſtands: it was a private houſe; but what were the diſtinguiſhing marks of a private play-houſe it is not eaſy to aſcertain: we are aſſured only that it was ſmaller than thoſe called public theatres; and that plays were uſually performed therein by candlelight. *The Globe* was a public theatre, and of conſiderable magnitude; plays were always acted there by daylight. It does not appear that it was built long before the year 1596.

It was ſituated on the Bank-ſide (the ſouthern ſide of the Thames), nearly oppoſite to Friday-ſtreet, Cheapſide; was an hexagonal wooden building, partly open to the weather, and partly thatched: on the roof of this and the other public theatres a pole was erected, to which a flag was affixed; diſplayed, probably, only juſt previous to, or during the hours of exhibition.

It has been conjectured that *The Globe*, though hexagonal at the outſide, was a rotunda within; and that it might have derived its name from its circular form; but, though the part appropriated to the audience was probably circular, the houſe, it is believed, was denominated only from its ſign; which was a figure of Hercules, or Atlas, ſupporting the globe; under which was written, *Totus mundus agit hiſtrionem.*

The Globe theatre was burnt down during the performance of Shakſpeare's play of King Henry VIII, June 29, 1613; but it was rebuilt in the following year, and decorated with more ornaments than had been originally beſtowed on it.

The exhibitions at *The Globe* ſeem to have been calculated for the lower claſs of people; thoſe at *Blackfriars* for a more ſelect and judicious audience.

The Theatre and *the Curtain* are inveighed againſt in ſermons, and ſatires, publiſhed in 1578, 80, and 83; the original ſign hung out at the latter was the painting of a curtain, ſtriped: the repreſentative, perhaps, of the ſtage-curtain within: the eye-repoſing green curtain, now in uſe in our theatres, not being then adopted.

The performers at this theatre were denominated *The Prince's Servants*, till the acceſſion of King Charles I. to the throne, ſoon after which period, it ſeems to have been uſed only by prize-fighters.

The Cock Pit, or *Phœnix*, had been originally a cock-pit. It was built, or rebuilt, not long before the year 1617, in which year it was pulled down by the mob. It was called the Phœnix, probably, from that fabulous bird being its ſign. It was ſituated oppoſite the Caſtle-tavern, in Drury-

lane

lane, and was ſtanding ſome time after the Reſtoration.

The players who performed at this theatre in the time of King James I. were called *The Queen's Servants*, till the death of Queen Anne, in 1616. After her death, they were denominated *The Lady Elizabeth's Servants*, and after the marriage of King Charles I. they reſumed their former title of *The Queen's Servants*. *The Fortune* is ſaid to have been the oldeſt theatre in London. It was rebuilt in 1599, by Edward Alleyn, the celebrated player.

It was a round brick building, of very conſiderable dimenſions; before it was a picture or ſtatue of *Fortune*.

It was burned down in 1621. *The Swan*, and *The Roſe* were ſhut up in 1613: the latter had been built before 1598; about the year 1620, they were uſed occaſionally for the exhibition of prizefighters.

Ben Jonſon's *Bartholomew Fair* was performed at *The Hope*, in 1614: in the Induction to which he does not give a very favourable deſcription of it. "Though the fair be not kept in the ſame region that ſome here perhaps would have it, yet think that the Author hath therein obſerved a ſpecial decorum, the place being as dirty as Smithfield, and as ſtinking every whit."

Having thus given a ſummary account of the early theatres, it may not be improper to annex a few anecdotes of our earlieſt actors, whoſe excellence has reſcued them from that oblivion into which moſt of their contemporaries have fallen; and ſo far as native humour could diſplay itſelf in the rude ſtate of the drama, and the premature age in which he ſhone can intitle him, Tarleton may claim priority of notice.

Richard

Richard Tarlton, or Tarleton, was born at Condover, in the county of Salop; but where, or at what period he commenced actor is unknown. He was brought to London, and introduced at court by a ſervant of Robert Earl of Leiceſter, who found him in a field keeping his father's ſwine; and that nobleman being highly pleaſed with what Fuller quaintly terms his happy *unhappy* anſwers; or, in other words, his pertinent replies to the queſtions aſked him; took him under his patronage.

Having become popular on the ſtage, he was, as hath been mentioned, ſelected for one of the Queen's ſervants; and had wages and a livery allowed him as groom of the chamber. His royal miſtreſs was ſo delighted with his humour, that, as Fuller ſays, "When Queen Elizabeth was ſerious, (I will not ſay ſullen,) he could undumpiſh her at pleaſure. Her higheſt favourites would in ſome caſes go to Tarlton before they would go to the Queen, and he was their uſher to prepare their advantageous acceſs to her. In a word he told the Queen more of her faults than moſt of her chaplains, and cured her melancholy better than all her phyſicians."

Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, ſays, "Here I muſt needs remember Tarleton, in his time gratious with the Queene his ſoveraigne, and in the people's generall applauſe."

Howes, the editor of Stow's Chronicle, ſays that "Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentifull, pleaſant extemporal wit, was the wonder of his tyme. He was ſo beloved that men uſe his picture for their ſignes."

Sir Richard Baker, in his *Theatrum Redivivum*, ſpeaking of Prynne, ſays, "let him try it when he will,

will, and come upon the ſtage himſelf, with all the ſcurrility of the Wife of Bath, with all the ribaldry of Poggius, or Boccace, yet I dare affirm, he ſhall never give that contentment to beholders, as honeſt Terlton did, though he ſaid never a word." Implying, that the very aſpect of Tarlton delighted the ſpectators, before he uttered a ſyllable.

Sir Richard, in his Chronicle, after giving due praiſe to Alleyn and Burbage, adds, "and to make their commedies complete, Richard Tarleton, who, for the part called the clownes part, never had his match, never will have.

Dr. Cave, *De Politica*, Oxf. 1588, 4to. ſays, "Ariſtoteles ſuum Theodoretum laudavit quendam peritum tragaediarum actorem, Cicero ſuum Roſcium, nos Angli *Tarletonum* in cujus voce & vultu omnes jocoſi affectus, in cujus cerebroſo capite lepidæ factiæ habitant.

Fuller alſo ſays, that "Much of his merriment lay in his very looks and actions, according to the epitaph written upon him:

Hic ſitus eſt cujus poterat, vox, actio, vultus,
Ex Heraclito reddere Democritum.

Which is thus varied in Hackett's *Select and remarkable Epitaphs*, 1757. vol. ii. p. 59.

Hic ſitus eſt, cujus vultus, vox, actio poſſet
Ex, &c.

"Indeed," proceeds Fuller, "the ſelf-ſame words ſpoken by another, would hardly move a merry man to ſmile, which, uttered by him, would force a ſad ſoul to laughter"

That he poſſeſſed the *Vis Comica* in a ſuper eminent degree, the following lines aſſures us:

——Tarlton when his head was only ſeene,
The tire-houſe doore and tapiſtrie betweene,
Set all the multitude in ſuch a laughter,
They could not hold for ſcarce an houre after.

Peacham's *Thalia's Banquet*, 8vo. 1620. An inſtance of his humour off the ſtage is recorded in *The Abortive of an Idle Hour*, 4to. 1620. written by Thomas Wroth. See Wood's *Athen. Oxon.* 2d. edit. vol. ii. Col. 256, 7.

Croſſe me not Liza, ne'ther be ſo perte,
For if thou do'ſt, I'll ſit upon thy ſkerte.

"Tarlton cut off all his ſkirts, becauſe none ſhould ſit upon them"

Had this anecdote been ſufficiently known, the modern, ſkirtleſs, *little*-great-coats; ſaid to have been denominated *Spencers* from their noble inventor, ſo named; might have been called, from their ſo-much-earler inventor, *Tarltons*.

He is repreſented with his tabor, &c. in a drawing in th Pepyſian Library, at Magdalen College, Cambridge; an accurate copy of which, drawn and engraved by the very ingenious Sylveſter Harding, may be ſeen in Hardings' *Ancient and Modern Miſcellany*.

He, for ſome time, kept an ordinary in Pater-noſter-row, and afterwards the ſign of the Tabor (which might be ſaid to be his emblem), a tavern in Gracechurch-ſtreet, where he was choſen ſcavenger; being often complained of by the ward for neglect, he laid the blame on the raker, the raker laid the blame on his horſe, who having been blooded and drenched the preceding day could not be worked: why then, quoth Tarlton, the horſe muſt ſuffer; ſo he ſent him to the Compter, and when

when the raker had done his work, ſent him to pay the fees, and redeem his horſe.

Another time, having run up a large ſcore at an ale-houſe, in Sandwich, he ordered his boy to accuſe him to the magiſtrates for a ſeminary prieſt; the officers coming into his chamber, found him on his knees, croſſing himſelf: they inſtantly ſeized him, paid his reckoning, and the charges of his journey to London, whither he wanted to go, but had not the means: when they brought him before the Recorder, Fleetwood, he inſtantly knew him: and not only diſcharged him from the cuſtody of the officers, but made him his gueſt, and entertained him very courteouſly.

In an extremely rare old pamphlet, entitled, "Chettle's [Henrie] Kind-harts Dreame, conteining five Apparitions, with their Invectives againſt abuſes raigning. [The Apparitions are thoſe of *Maſter Anthony Tarlton*, *Will Cuckowe*, *Dr. Burcot*, and *Rob. Greene.*] B. L. impr. for *Will Wright.*" 4to. no date, but publiſhed in December 1592, he is deſcribed as repreſented in the before mentioned drawing. "The next, by his ſuit of ruſſet, his buttoned cap, his taber, his ſtand on the toe, and other tricks, I knew to be either the body or reſemblance of Tarlton; who living, for his pleaſant conceits was of all men liked, and dying, for mirth left not his like."

In the infancy of the ſtage, a great part of the entertainment of the audience was derived from caſual, and occaſional ſallies of wit, whim, and humour, from the favourite comedians; nor did this cuſtom totally ceaſe, 'till it expired with Shuter, who poſſeſſed the richeſt, melloweſt, moſt luxuriant humour of any actor, not even Garrick excepted

excepted, who has performed within the memory of man,

In 1611, was publiſhed a book in 4to. called *Tarlton's Jeaſts*, in which are ſpecimens of this extempore wit, ſo delightful to our ſimple anceſtors; the following is one.

While he was performing a part at the Bull in Biſhopſgate-ſtreet, where the Queen's players often played, and was kneeling down to aſk his father's bleſſing, as Launcelot in the Merchant of Venice does, a fellow in the gallery threw an apple at him, which hit him on the cheek; Tarlton immediately took it up, and advancing, thus addreſſed the audience:

"Gentlemen, this fellow, with his face of mapple*,
Inſtead of a pippin hath thrown me an apple;
But as for an app e he hath caſt a crab,
So inſtead of an honeſt woman God hath ſent him a drab."

The people, adds the relater, laughed heartily, for the fellow had a quean to his wife.

Tarlton's wife, whoſe name was Kate, is ſaid to have been ſtill worſe; not being faithful to him: on his paſſage from Southampton, and every man compelled during a ſtorm to throw all his baggage overboard, he offered to throw his wife over, but was prevented by the other paſſengers.

The following ſtory, given in the author's words, is another proof of his great privilege with, and power over the audience.

* i. e. *rough* and *carbuncled*; Ben Johnſon deſcribes his own face, *rocky:* the bark of the maple being uncommonly rough, and the grain of one of the ſorts of this tree, as Evelyn expreſſes it, "undulated and criſped into variety of curls."

"At

"At the Bull at Biſhopsgate was a play of *Henry the Fifth* [the one which preceded Shakſpeare's] and becauſe *he* was abſent that ſhould take the blow, Tarlton himſelfe, ever forward to pleaſe, tooke upon him to play the ſame judge, beſides his own part of the clowne; and Knel, then playing Henry the Fifth, hit Tarlton a ſound box indeed, which made the people laugh the more, becauſe it was he: but anon the Judge goes in, and immediately Tarlton, in his clownes cloaths, comes out, and aſks the actors, *What newes?*

"O, faith one, had'ſt thou been here, thou ſhouldeſt have ſeen Prince Henry hit the Judge a terrible box on the eare. What, man, ſaid Tarlton, ſtrike a judge? It is true, i'faith, ſaid the other. No other like, ſaid Tarlton, and it could not but be terrible to the Judge, when the report ſo terrifies me, that methinks the blowe remains ſtill on my cheeke, that it burns again. The people laught at this mightily, and to this day I have heard it commended for rare; but no marvell, for he had many of theſe. But I would ſee our clownes in theſe days doe the like. No, I warrant ye; and yet they thinke well of themſelves too."

It was cuſtomary, when the play was ended, for *themes* to be given to him by ſome of the audience, which, to their no ſmall entertainment, he would deſcant upon; in his "*Jeaſts*" is the following:

"I remember I was once at a play in the country, where, as Tarlton's uſe was, the play being done, every one ſo pleaſed threw up his

theame: amongſt all the reſt one was read to this effect, word by word:

"Tarlton, I am one of thy friends, and none of thy foes,
Then I pr'ythee tell me how thou cam'ſt by thy flat noſe?"

To underſtand the ſatire contained in this couplet, it is neceſſary the reader ſhould be informed, that Tarlton is ſaid to have ſacrificed the bridge of his noſe at the altar of Venus.

To the ſarcaſm he gave an extempore reply, in ſome lines too groſs for modern auditors or readers, the point of which may be gathered from the following anecdote related of him, in the ſame book:

"There was one Bankes in the time of Tarlton, who ſerved the Earl of Eſſex, and had a horſe of ſtrange qualities*; and being at the Croſs-

* Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *Hiſtory of the World*, ſays, "If Bankes had lived in older times, he would have ſhamed all the inchanters in the world: for whoſoever was moſt famous among them, could never maſter, or inſtruct any beaſt, as he did his horſe."

And Sir Kenelm Digby, in his *Treatiſe on Bodies*, obſerves, "that his [Bankes's] horſe, would reſtore a glove to the due owner, after the maſter had whiſpered the man's name in his ear; would tell the juſt number of pence in any piece of ſilver coin, newly ſhowed him by his maſter; &c. whenſoever he had bade him."

Among other exploits of this celebrated beaſt, it is ſaid that he went up to the top of St. Paul's.

In 1595, was publiſhed a pamphlet, in 4to. entituled, "*Maroccus*

Croſs-keyes, in Gracious-ſtreete, getting money with him, as he was mightily reſorted to, Tarlton then (with his fellowes) playing at the Bull by, came into the Croſs-keyes, amongſt many people to ſee faſhions: which Bankes perceiving, to make the people laugh, ſaies, *Signior*, to his horſe, *go, fetch me the verieſt foole in the company.* The jade comes immediately, and with his mouth drawes Tarlton forth. Tarlton, with merry words, ſaid nothing but *God-a-mercy, horſe.* In the end Tarlton, ſeeing the people laugh ſo, was

" *Maroccus Extaticus*, [by which this famous animal appears to have been of the Barbary breed] *or Bankes's bay Horſe in a Trance. A diſcourſe ſet downe in a merry dialogue between Bankes and his beaſt*, &c." prefixed to it was a print of the horſe ſtanding on his hind legs, with a ſtick in his mouth; his maſter with a ſtick in his hand, and a pair of dice on the ground: a copy of which is given in Malone's *Shakſpeare*, 1790, V. ii p. 323. and a fac-ſimile of it in Steevens's *Shakſpeare*, 1793, V. v. p. 202.

Ben Jonſon hints at the unfortunate cataſtrophe of both man and horſe, which happened at Rome; where (Tantum religio potuit ſuadere malorum) they were burnt by order of the Pope for magicians! What a ſatire, in another point of view alſo, and upon another part of the human race, is Bankes's horſe! How many *'ſquires, knights, lords, dukes, princes, potentates*, have lived and died without any pre-eminence but birth and fortune; their very names being now forgotten! whilſt a *brute*, a *beaſt*, a *horſe*, by imbibing the precepts of a ſagacious tutor; and thereby excelling, as far as his nature was capable, the reſt of his ſpecies; has not only eſcaped oblivion, but, in being adverted to by our divine bard (See Shakſpeare's *Love's Labour Loſt*, A. 1. S. 2), is become, with him, immortal!

angry inwardly, and ſaid, *Sir, had I a power of your horſe, as you have, I would do more than that. Whate'er it be,* ſaid Bankes, to pleaſe him, *I will charge him to do it.* Then, ſaies Tarlton, *charge him to bring me the veryeſt whoremaſter in the company. He ſhall,* ſaies Bankes. *Signior,* ſays he, *bring Maſter Tarlton the veryeſt whore-maſter in the company.* The horſe leads his maſter to him. Then, *God-a-mercy, horſe,* indeed, ſaies Tarlton. The people had much ado to keep peace: but Bankes and Tarlton had like to have ſquared, and the horſe by, to give aime. But ever after it was a by word thorow London, *God-a-mercy, horſe!* and is to this day."

It is by ſome related, that the flatneſs of Tarlton's noſe was occaſioned by his interpoſing between ſome bears and dogs; probably at Paris Garden, on the Bank-ſide, Southwark: which he made light of, ſaying, it did not ſo much affect him, but that he could ſmell an honeſt man from a knave.

Whether this feature was ſacrificed at the ſhrine of Venus, or mangled at the Bear-garden, we have Tarlton's own confeſſion of his being a very free liver, preſerved in the following anecdote. Having produced a drama, called *The Seven Deadly Sins*; Gabriel Harvey, the friend and correſpondent of Spenſer, in "*Four letters and certain Sonnets;*" 1592, calls it Tarlton's "*Famous play*;" and adds, "which moſt deadly but lively playe I might have ſeen in London, and was verie gently invited therunto at Oxford by Tarlton himſelfe; of whom I merrily demaunding, which of the ſeaven was his own deadlie ſinne, he bluntly anſwered after this manner;

ner; by G—— the ſinne of other gentlemen, lechery."

If ſome of Tarlton's jokes, witticiſms, and buffooneries, now appear flat and inſipid; it muſt be remembered that, when he flouriſhed, Engliſh humour was an embryo; which Shakſpeare afterwards gave birth to, and Jonſon reared to maturity: but, he muſt have been conſidered as ſuper-excellent in his time, of whom ſurly Ben, ever coſtive of praiſe, in *The Induction* to his comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*, makes the ſtage-keeper ſpeak thus:—

"I kept the ſtage in Maſter Tarlton's time, I thank my ſtars. Ho! an' that man had liv'd to have play'd in Bartholomew Fair, you ſhould ha' ſeen him ha' come in, and ha' been cozened i'the cloth-quarter ſo finely!"

It appears from the titles of ſome old pamphlets, that notwithſtanding his very eccentric and free life, Tarlton became in the end a penitent; he died in 1588, and was buried September the third, as appears by the pariſh regiſter of St. Leonard's, Shoredich, in which church he was buried: about this period, as we learn from the entries in the books of the Stationers' Company, were licenſed, "*A ſorrowful new Sonnette, intituled, Tarlton's Recantation upon this Theame, given him by a Gent at the Bel Savage without Ludgate* (nowe or els never) *being the laſte theame he ſonge*;" and "Tarleton's *Repentance and his Farewell to his Frendes in his Sickneſs, a little before his death.*" In *Wit's Bedlam*, 8vo. 1617, is the following quaint, but highly complimentary, epitaph;

"ON TARLTON.

"Here within this ſullen earth
"Lies *Dick Tarlton*, lord of mirth;
"Who in his grave ſtill, laughing gapes,
"Syth all *clownes* ſince have been his apes:
"Earſt he of clownes to learne ſtill ſought;
"But now they learn of him they taught.
"By art far paſt the principall,
"The *counterfet* is, ſo, worth all."

On a retroſpection of the foregoing ſketch of the infancy of the ſtage, ſome of the features ſeem to require a firmer outline, and more decided pencil. According to the beſt accounts, William Fitz-Stephen, who was a monk of Canterbury, compoſed his "*Deſcriptio*," &c. in the year 1174; but ſo early as the year 1110 the miracle-play of *Saint Catharine*, written by a learned Norman, named Geoffrey, who was afterwards Abbot of St. Alban's, was acted, in Latin, it is preſumed, and probably by his ſcholars, in the abbey of Dunſtable; it being perhaps the firſt exhibition of the kind in England.

The Cheſter Myſteries, written by Ralph Higden, a monk of Cheſter, were exhibited in that city, at the expence of the different trading companies therein, about the year 1327; and, from the difficulty wherewith the Pope's permiſſion that they might be preſented in Engliſh was obtained, it is inferred that all our *Myſteries* till then were performed in Latin: *The Cheſter Myſteries*, therefore, have the diſtinction of being the firſt Engliſh dramatic repreſentations.

When the diſtinct and ſeparate profeſſion of a player, or comedian, commenced, and was eſtabliſhed,

liſhed, has eluded the moſt minute enquiries of our dramatic antiquaries; Myſteries, Moralities, &c. we are aſſured were firſt performed by prieſts, ſcholars, and ſinging-boys: retainers to noblemen, when the vernacular tongue became that of the ſtage, encroached upon the hitherto preſcriptive province of the clergy; and, from performing occaſionally in the great hall of their patron, upon particular feſtivals, acquired a habit which they did not care to ſhake off: aſſociating themſelves, it may be, with "younger ſons to younger brothers," minſtrels, whoſe profeſſion was now on the decline, and other perſons of more ingenuity than wealth, they rambled from manſion to manſion, and from town to town, offering their performances to whoever would reward them: till, in the end, they conſolidated, became ſtationary, and obtained "a local habitation and a name."

Although this important æra in theatrical hiſtory cannot be preciſely aſcertained, there are documents exiſting, which prove it to be much earlier than was generally imagined. We learn from Stowe, that "when King Edward the Fourth would ſhew himſelf in ſtate to the view of the people, he repaired to his palace at St. John's, where he was accuſtomed to ſee the *city-actors.*" From the following articles, in ſome books in the Remembrancer's Office in the Exchequer, containing an account of the daily expences of King Henry the Seventh, it appears that players, both French and Engliſh, were at that time ſupported by regal eſtabliſhment.

Item,

Item, to *the Frenſhe players*, in reward, 20*s*.
Item, to *the players of London*, in reward 10*s*.

Theſe were in the 13th, and the following in the 9th year of this King's reign. *Item*. payd for *two plays* in the hall, 26s. 8d. *Item*. to *the kings players* for a reward, 100s. and,—bluſh, Thalia! weep, Melpomone!—*Item*, to the players that begged by the way, 6s. 8d.

The article relating to *the Frenſhe players* muſt be attributed to the knowledge and predilection, perhaps, of the French language and manners, which Henry, when Earl of Richmond, acquired in foreign courts.

In another account, it is ſaid, that "the king [Henry 7.], the quene, and my ladye the kyngs moder, came into the Whit hall, and ther had *a pley*." and that "this Chriſtmas [1488] ther wer *many and dyvers playes*."

Heywood informs us, that licenſes were granted to the players by King Henry the Eighth, King Edward the Sixth, and Queen Mary.

That the profeſſion of a player had become a common, and abſolutely eſtabliſhed one, both in London, and in the country, in the latter King's reign, we are aſſured, by a proclamation having been iſſued in the year 1574, to prohibit, for about two months, the exhibition of "any kind of interlude, play, dialogue, or other matter, ſet forth in the form of a play, in the Engliſh tongue; foraſmuch, as a great number of thoſe that be *common players of interludes and plays*, as well within the city of London as elſewhere within the realme, doe for the moſt part play ſuch interludes as contain matter tending to ſedition," &c.

By

By *common* players, it is imagined, were meant the players of the city, in contradiſtinction to the King's own ſervants; there being, in a manuſcript, now in the library of the Marquis of Lanſdown, ſundry charges for the players belonging to King Edward the Sixth. Queen Mary had alſo a theatrical eſtabliſhment; in her houſehold-book, in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, is this entry: "Eight players of interludes, each 66s. 8d.—21l. 13s. 4d."

The firſt regular licenſe, however, extant, is that granted by Queen Elizabeth, at Weſtminſter, May 10, 1574, to James Burbage, John Perkyn, John Lanham, William Johnſon, and Robert Wilſon; which may be ſeen at length in Mr. Malone's moſt comprehenſive account of the Engliſh Stage: and, in 1583, as hath been mentioned, twelve of the principal comedians, ſervants of the Earls of Derby, Pembroke, and Eſſex; the Lord Chamberlain; the Lord Admiral, Nottingham; Lords Strange, Suſſex, Worceſter, &c. were embodied.

Eight of theſe, among whom doubtleſs were Tarlton and Thomas Wilſon, had an annual ſtipend of 3l. 6s. 8d. each, beſides liveries.

At this period there were eight companies of comedians performing in London, once, twice, or thrice a week; whoſe profit has been computed, on the average of playing only once a week each, at two thouſand pounds a year at leaſt.

To relieve the dryneſs of dates and computations, the reader is requeſted to refer to Sir Francis Walſingham's reply concerning The Play of the Cards; and to annex to it the following

lowing admirable illuſtration thereof; taken from Vanburgh's Vindication of his Relapſe, and Provok'd Wife, from the aſperſions of Collier:

"The buſineſs of Comedy is to ſhew people what they ſhou'd do, by repreſenting them upon the ſtage, doing what they ſhou'd not. Nor is there any neceſſity a Philoſopher ſhou'd ſtand by, like an Interpreter, at a Puppet-ſhow, to explain the Moral to the Audience: The Myſtery is ſeldom ſo deep, but the Pit and Boxes can dive into it; and 'tis their Example out of the Play-houſe, that chiefly influences the Galleries. The Stage is a Glaſs for the World to view itſelf in; People ought thereforh to ſee themſelves as they are; if it makes their Faces too Fair, they won't know they are dirty; and by conſequence will neglect to waſh 'em."

Contemporary, or nearly ſo, with Tarlton, was Edward Alleyn, the greateſt actor of his own, or it may be, any time; from a memorandum, now extant, in his own hand-writing, it appears that he was born September 1, 1566, near Devonſhire Houſe, in the Pariſh of St. Botolph, without Biſhopſgate: Fuller, in his *Worthies*, ſays, that he was bred a ſtage-player; that his father would have given him a liberal education, but that Edward was not diſpoſed to a ſerious courſe of life. However that may have been, as he was a youth of excellent capacity, cheerful temper, tenacious memory, ſweet and copious elocution, fine feelings, with the external advantages of a handſome face, and dignified perſon; ſo, by adhering to maxims of prudence and œconomy, making his buſineſs his pleaſure, not

not pleaſure his buſineſs, he became not only the moſt eminent actor, but one of the beſt men then living.

Whether or not he was bred from his childhood to the ſtage, as was the cuſtom with the boys of St. Paul's, it is certain that he muſt have applied himſelf very early to the drama, as he had acquired great celebrity before the death of Marlowe, who was killed in a fray in 1592; in whoſe tragedy of *The Jew of Malta*, Alleyn performed the Jew, *Barabas*, to ſuch perfection, as to gain thereby the epithet of *peerleſs*: nor, indeed, is there a character on the ſtage, that requires ſuch a variety and contraſt of expreſſion, as might entitle the conſummate exhibitior to ſo diſtinguiſhed an addition.

In ſome MSS. of the lord-keeper, Puckering, in the Harleian Library, a writer of that age, ſpeaking of Alleyn, when he had nearly reached his zenith, ſays, that "He had then ſo captivated the town, and ſo monopolized the favour of his audience, by thoſe agreeable varieties he could ſo readily command, in his voice, countenance, and geſture; and ſo judiciouſly adapt to the characters he played, as even to animate the moſt lifeleſs compoſitions, and ſo highly improve them, that he wholly engaged thoſe who heard and ſaw him, from conſidering the propriety of the ſentiments he pronounced, or of the parts he perſonated; and all the defects of the poet were either beautified, palliated, or atoned for, by the perfections of the player."

Heywood, ſpeaking of *The Jew of Malta*, tells us that "the part of the Jew was performed by *ſo inimitable an actor* as Mr. Alleyn;" and, in the

the prologue, ſpoken at the revival of this play at the Cock-pit, after the death of Alleyn, the old dramatiſt ſays:

We know not how our play may paſs this ſtage,
But by the beſt of poets in that age,
The Malta Jew had being, and was made;
And he, then, by the *beſt of actors* play'd.
In Hero and Leander one did gain
A laſting memory; in Tamerlane,
This Jew, with others many, th' other wan
The attribute of *peerleſs*; being a man
Whom we may rank with (doing no one wrong)
Proteus for ſhapes, and Roſcius for a tongue.

But, as ſcarcity generally adds value to what is rare, ſo muſt Ben Jonſon's eulogium be ſet the greateſt ſtore by; ſince tranſcendent excellence, only, was ever honoured with his praiſe. In his 89th epigram he thus amply panegyrizes Alleyn.

If Rome ſo great, and in her wiſeſt age,
Fear'd not to boaſt the glories of her ſtage,
As ſkilful Roſcius, and grave Æſop, men,
Yet crown'd with honours, as with riches then;
Who had no leſs a trumpet of their name
Than Cicero, whoſe ev'ry breath was fame:
How can ſo great example die in me,
That, Alleyn, I ſhould pauſe to publiſh thee?
Who both their graces in thyſelf haſt more
Outſtript, than they did all that went before:
And preſent worth in all doſt ſo contract,
As others ſpeak, but only thou doſt act.
Wear this renown, 'tis juſt, that who did give
So many poets life, by one ſhould live.

Theſe are high compliments to ſuper-eminence; but the higheſt praiſe due to this good as well as great man, is, that having acquired a very conſiderable

conſiderable fortune, in conſequence of the ſucceſs of his profeſſional abilities, and from ſeveral other reſources, which his ſituation and connections threw in his way; he appropriated the whole of it to the founding and endowing a college at Dulwich; which was not only done during his own life-time, but it is an actual fact, that he afterwards entered himſelf as a penſioner, and thus put himſelf on a level with the objects of his own charity!—It has been obſervable, that from the firſt foundation of the drama,—with whatever illiberal reflections the members of it have been aſperſed, and in whatever degree of diſrepute they may have been held by thoſe of other profeſſions, yet none could ever accuſe them of ſelfiſhneſs or avarice; and, beſides the above example cited to the honour of Mr. Alleyn, the Hiſtory of the Stage abounds with inſtances of ſuch noble and diſintereſted acts of friendſhip and benevolence, as would, in the relation, put the cold prudential *practice* of their cenſurers to the bluſh.

Several of the old comedies are repreſented in their title pages, as "acted by the children of Paul's," others, by "the Children of her Majeſty's Chapel;" of the latter, Field and Underwood were the moſt celebrated, and, afterwards, became actors of ſome repute at the Blackfriars Theatre.

In the firſt year of King James the Firſt, a licence was granted to Shakeſpeare and Fletcher (the dramatic partner of Beaumont) in conjunction with the players, Burbage, Hemming, and Condell, authoriſing them to act "Plays and Interludes at their houſe, the Globe in Black-friars,

or in any other part of the kingdom, during pleaſure;" this is the firſt regular Dramatic patent we know of, it having been, heretofore, cuſtomary for noblemen to have their own particular companies, who acted under the ſanction of their patrons; and though Queen Elizabeth eſtabliſhed a company of regular performers, who received ſalaries as "Her Majeſty's Servants;" yet that circumſtance did not prevent or exclude any baron of the realm, or other great perſonage, from doing the ſame thing. Hemmings and Condell, are particularly noticed in Shakeſpeare's will, as his "loving fellows," and, after his death, they publiſhed the firſt complete edition of his works.

It would be ſuperfluous here, to enlarge on the biography of Shakeſpeare; his life has been ſo frequently and correctly given, not only at the head of almoſt every edition of his works, but by a variety of writers, the ſum of whoſe reſearches is briefly as follows:

William, the ſon of John Shakeſpeare, and the eldeſt of ten children, was born at Stratford upon Avon, April 16th, 1564,—as early as at the age of ſeventeen, he married a reſpectable young woman, called Anne Hatheaway, whoſe ſirname has furniſhed matter for many poetical pieces, falſely aſcribed to Shakeſpeare, and for as many ſatires on thoſe literary impoſitions.

His unfortunate frolic, for it was nothing more, in the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, was the occaſion of our poet's coming to London; where, from performing the loweſt offices incident to the Drama, he became one of its moſt

moſt glorious and memorable ſupporters; having written thirty-ſix plays, the worſt of which moſt certainly contain proofs of genius hitherto unequalled.

His emoluments, as an author and manager, enabled him to purchaſe a reſpectable ſufficiency to maintain him in his native place; where, having deſerved and obtained the good word and eſteem of every one, not only as a writer, but as a man, he died on the 23d of April, 1616; leaving a widow and two daughters; and though his family ſhortly after became extinct, his literary offspring will probably outlaſt the memory of many and many an age to come.

Jonſon, the cotemporary of our poet, was born in 1574, and was educated under the celebrated Camden; though, it is ſaid, that he afterwards was obliged to work under his father-in-law, as a bricklayer; which diſguſting employ, to a man of genius, he quitted for the calling of a ſoldier, in which character he killed one of the enemy in ſight of both armies. On his return from campaigning, he commenced actor, but with no ſucceſs; yet his martial ſpirit ſo far remained with him, that he killed a brother performer in a duel.

Shakeſpeare was his firſt and liberal patron, and introduced to the public his firſt printed play of "Every Man in his Humour." Jonſon afterwards wrote Maſques for the coronations of James I. and Charles II. beſides ſeveral Entertainments for the court of Elizabeth. In 1610, he produced the "Alchymiſt," and was afterwards Poet Laureat to King James I. His poetical genius latterly left him, and he was, in his

old age, afflicted with poverty. Charles the Firſt occaſionally relieved his diſtreſſes. A palſy terminated his life, Auguſt 6, 1637, in his ſixty-third year.

Beaumont and Fletcher, the latter of whom we have before noticed, as being jointly licenced with Shakeſpeare in the Globe Theatre, it is needleſs to ſay, carried on a kind of poetical firm; and the plays they wrote thus jointly, are about fifty-three in number. Of the talents of the firſt, a more honourable teſtimony cannot be given than the following, by Ben Jonſon, who had ſuch an opinion of him, that he frequently committed to him the correction of his own works:—

"How do I love thee, Beaumont, and thy muſe,
"That unto me doſt ſuch religious uſe!
"How do I fear myſelf, that am not worth
"The leaſt indulgent thought thy pen drops forth?
"At once thou mak'ſt me happy, and unmak'ſt;
"And giving largely to me, more than tak'ſt;
"What fate is mine, that ſo itſelf bereaves?
"What art is thine, that ſo thy friend deceives?
"When even there, where moſt thou praiſeſt me,
"For writing better, I muſt envy thee!"

Beaumont was deſcended from an ancient family, at Grace Dieu, in Leiceſterſhire, where he was born about 1586. His grandfather, John, was Maſter of the Rolls; and his father, Francis Beaumont, one of the Judges of the Common Pleas. He finiſhed his education at Cambridge, and became a Student of the Inner Temple; but the warmth of his affection for the muſes ſoon rendered them rivals too powerful for the law. Beaumont made his exit from this world's drama in March, 1615, under thirty years of age; and lies

lies buried in the entrance of St. Benedict's Chapel, Weſtminſter Abbey.

John Fletcher was ſon of Dr. Richard Fletcher, Biſhop of London; was born in Northamptonſhire, in 1576; received his education at Cambridge; made great proficiency in his ſtudies; was accounted a ſcholar of the firſt claſs; and as remarkable for his extraordinary wit and vivacity as Beaumont.

Such is the ſimilarity of genius in Beaumont and Fletcher, that it is not eaſy to diſcover two ſtyles of writing in any one of their joint productions. It is generally conceived, that the judgment of Beaumont was employed to correct the rich luxuriance of Fletcher's exuberant imagination.

After the death of Beaumont, it has been ſaid, Fletcher was aſſiſted in his plots by Shirley; but there appears little foundation for this aſſertion. In fact, little is known of Fletcher's life; who died of the plague, in London, in 1625, and was interred in St. Mary Overy, Southwark.

In the writings of Fletcher, a courtly elegance, and genteel familiarity of ſtyle, is very conſpicuous; and Beaumont, though the younger man by ten years, had the moſt judgment. Their union, however, happily raiſed them to one of the moſt elevated ſituations in the temple of dramatic fame.

From the reign of Elizabeth to the year 1645, when the civil wars were at their height, the ſtage might be ſaid to flouriſh; the court led the faſhion, and the people followed it. Tragedies, Comedies, and Maſques were, as mentioned in the above Memoirs of Jonſon, performed in the

royal palaces; and the decorations were not only magnificent, but the royal family and principal nobility, frequently acted in thoſe pieces themſelves.

The actors at this time were numerous, there being five companies of performers; who, in their reſpective theatres, acquired money and lived in reputation; eſpecially thoſe of Blackfriars, who were "men of grave and ſober behaviour." Their prices were low; a tapeſtry hanging was all their ſcenes, their dreſſes were anſwerable; for though machinery and decorative embelliſhment had been introduced at court, yet they were too expenſive for the players to make uſe of on their own account.—No women were admitted into their theatrical repreſentations; they were therefore clear from thoſe illiberal reflections which are in modern times too frequently caſt upon the female children of the drama. Marlowe, a player, and author in that age, is, however, ſtigmatiſed by cotemporary writers, as a man of bad morals, and he loſt his life in conſequence of his irregularities; had his brother performers been remarkable for their diſſolute manners, it ſeems to follow that Marlowe's character would have eſcaped ſuch ſevere cenſure.

In the ſucceeding troubles, moſt of the players joined the army of King Charles the Firſt; and when the royal party were overthrown, they returned to London, and forming one company, played at the Cockpit, but were ſoon ſuppreſſed —the long parliament abſolutely forbid all ſtage-plays and interludes—the ſtages, ſeats, and galleries were pulled down; and all players convicted of acting were to be puniſhed as rogues; and

every

every ſpectator ſentenced to pay five ſhillings, as a fine to the poor.

The players, thus driven to diſtreſs, gained a precarious livelihood, at the hazard of the beadle's laſh, by travelling the country and performing at noblemen's houſes—and one Cox, an actor of that time, under colour of rope-dancing, got permiſſion to act drolls or farces, written by himſelf, or occaſionally made uſe of various ſcenes from the old ſtock comedies—his houſe was the Red Bull; but he went to wakes and fairs, and even performed at the univerſities.

The dramatic muſes were reſtored with the regal power. Sir William D'avenant opened, by permiſſion, a ſort of theatre at Rutland Houſe in Charter-houſe-yard, with what was ſtyled, his "Firſt Day's Entertainment, at Rutland Houſe, by Declamation and Muſic, after the Manner of the Ancients." The declamations were firſt between Diogenes and Ariſtophanes, concerning moral entertainments; and, ſecondly, between a Londoner and a Pariſian, concerning the pre-eminence of London or Paris. At this houſe were alſo repreſented, "The Hiſtory of Sir Francis Drake, expreſſed by Inſtrumental and Vocal Muſic, and by Art of Perſpective in Scenes;"—and the "Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru;" which pieces had been written by Sir William, and acted by ſtealth in the time of Oliver Cromwell.

In the year 1659, one Rhodes, a bookſeller, who had before the troubles been wardrobe keeper to the theatre in Blackfriars, obtained a licence for a company of players to perform in the Cock-pit, Drury-lane; where he introduced his

two apprentices, Betterton and Kynaſton. This company was afterwards taken into the houſe opened by Sir W. D'avenant, who obtained a patent from Charles the Second, to form a new company; to be called the Duke's, with which he opened a theatre in "Little Lincoln's Fields."—The firſt play was his own, called "The Siege of Rhodes;" wherein the firſt exhibition of ſtage machinery was introduced; and in conſequence of the extraordinary expence, the price of admiſſion to the boxes was raiſed from two ſhillings and ſixpence, to four ſhillings; the pit from eighteen-pence to half-a-crown; the firſt gallery from one ſhilling to one ſhilling and ſixpence; and the upper gallery from ſixpence to one-ſhilling. How long the old prices had been accuſtomed to be received is uncertain.

About this time, Charles the Second alſo granted a patent to Henry Killegrew, Eſq. whoſe company performed at Drury-lane, and was called the King's Servants.—Ten of them were eſtabliſhed on the king's houſhold; had an allowance of liveries, and were ſtyled gentleman of the great chamber. The Engliſh ſtage now began to aſſume a degree of ſplendour unknown at any former period of its exiſtence. The female parts having been uſually performed by boys and young men of effeminate appearance, the effect of them was, in a great meaſure, deſtroyed; which defect was obviated by Sir Wm. D'avenant, who, in imitation of the French, firſt introduced women in dramatic repreſentations; a novelty, which at that time, was particularly well received. This alteration, however, was not made at once, for Kynaſton is ſaid to have

have afterwards worn petticoats with ſingular ſucceſs; and as plays then began at four o'clock in the afternoon, the ladies could go to the Ring in Hyde Park, after they were over; and it was the faſhion to take Kynaſton in their coaches, dreſt in his female habit. It was in behalf of this performer, that the celebrated apology was made to king Charles the Second, who, waiting for the play to begin, was told, that "*the Queen was not yet ſhaved.*"

Sir William alſo introduced on the ſtage thoſe operatic ſpectacles, interſperſed with dancing and ſcenic decorations, which have ſince been ſo much enlarged upon; of which kind were the Tempeſt, Circe, Pyſche, &c. The two companies were very ſucceſsful, and ſo much in favour of the court, that the King, and the Duke of York uſed, frequently, to hear and determine their private diſputes; but after the death of Sir William, which happened in 1668, the buſineſs of the theatres rather declined, and continued to do ſo till 1684; when, to ſtrengthen their attraction, they united under one firm; prior to which, ſo fickle is popular taſte, the two companies had been ſo much diſtreſſed by a famous puppet-ſhew in Saliſbury Change, where Cecil Street now ſtands, that they were reduced to the neceſſity of petitioning the King againſt it. The profits of acting were, at that time, divided into twenty ſhares; ten of which went to the proprietors, and the remaining ten to the performers, in proportion to their reſpective merits. The actors, at that time the moſt celebrated, beſides thoſe above-mentioned, were Hart and Mohun; the former of whom had borne the commiſſion

commiſſion of Captain, in the royal cauſe, during the Civil Wars; and the latter had, at the ſame time, been a Major. Hart quitted the ſtage on the union of the two companies, and Mohun did not long ſurvive it; theſe two actors were, in the times of their ſucceſſors, honoured with the ſame extravagant encomiums as Betterton and Montfort were in the days of Booth and Wilkes; and as Booth and Wilkes themſelves were afterwards.

Among the actreſſes of that day, and, as before obſerved, the firſt who ever appeared on the Engliſh ſtage, were ſeveral of King Charles's miſtreſſes; particularly the celebrated Mrs. Ellen Gwynn, with whom he was ſo irreſiſtibly charmed, on ſeeing her perform, that he is ſaid to have carried her off in her ſtage cloaths. Indeed, the introduction of women upon the ſtage, in an age ſo indelicate, was productive of the beginning of that immorality the theatres have ſince been rather too ſeverely taxed with.

About this time flouriſhed Southern; he was the firſt who raiſed the profits of play-writing to a ſecond or third night. He died in 1746, in the eighty-ſixth year of his age.

In 1690, the united patentees had incurred a large debt, which occaſioned ſeveral ſuits in Chancery, and a great reduction in the ſalaries of the actors; who, complaining of their hardſhips, the Lord Chamberlain interfered; and, after the legality of the caſe had been conſidered, a patent was granted by King William, to Betterton and others, to form a company, and act for themſelves. A new theatre was built, in conſequence, by

by ſubſcription, within the walls of the Tenniscourt, in Lincoln's Inn Fields; which opened, in 1695, with Congreve's Comedy of "*Love for Love*," the ſucceſs of which was ſo great, that Mr. Congreve was offered a ſhare in the management, on condition of furniſhing one play a year; but did not produce his "*Mourning Bride*" till two years afterwards; and was three years more in bringing out his "*Way of the World.*" In 1706, Sir John Vanbrugh obtained a licence from Queen Anne, to open a theatre in the Haymarket, jointly with Mr. Congreve, to which the whole company of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre followed; but were ſo unſucceſsful, that in two years the houſe became inſolvent.

Mr. Owen Swiney then took the theatre and appurtenances, at a certain rent; and was joined by Wilks, Cibber, and Dogget, from Drury-lane; from whence they had ſeceded on account of the tyranny of their manager, who was the agent of certain gentlemen, purchaſers of the royal patents; but who, unwilling to give up the time and attention neceſſary for managing the theatres, deputed their authority to one who abuſed it. In 1714, this patent was, however, ſuperſeded; and the management, by a court licence, given to Wilks, Cibber, and Dogget.

On the acceſſion of George the Firſt, Sir Richard Steele obtained a licence, as Governor of his Majeſty's Company of Comedians; and Wilks, Cibber, and Booth, were appointed directors and ſharers with him. About the ſame time, a new theatre was built in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and a licence obtained for opening it; to which ſeven or eight actors deſerted from Drury-lane.

lane. The two theatres continued in the ſame ſituation till 1718, when Sir Richard Steele procured a patent for his company, which had hitherto acted only under a licence. As a competition naturally enſued between the two houſes; each had recourſe to novel entertainments, and dancing was at Drury-lane, by the addition of a plot told in action, improved into the ſtyle of our preſent ballets. The Fable of "Mars and Venus," was the firſt of theſe repreſentations, and ſucceeded beyond expectation. From this original hint ſprung up all thoſe different ſpecies of Pantomime our theatres are now ſo celebrated for. Sir Richard Steele continued in the management ſixteen years, and renounced it on ſome differences ariſing between him and the performers; when the patent was renewed to his colleagues for twenty-one years.

Sir Richard Steele died in the year 1729, on the 1ſt of September. He was born at Dublin, though of Engliſh parents, and was educated at the Charter-houſe, London, with his cotemporary and friend, Mr. Addiſon.

When he firſt turned author, he was in the army, at which time he wrote his "Chriſtian Hero," which, though at firſt intended for private uſe alone, was afterwards publiſhed: His comedy of "The Funeral, or Grief A-la-mode," was performed in 1702—his "Tender Huſband," in 1703—and his "Lying Lovers," in 1704. In 1715, he was knighted by George the Firſt; and in 1722, produced his comedy of "The Conſcious Lovers,"—for which, and his dedication to the King, he received a penſion of five hundred pounds. In his life-time, beſides being

Governor

Governor of the Royal Company of Comedians, he held various places under government—as Commiſſioner of the Stamp Office, Writer of the Gazette, Surveyor of the Royal Stables at Hampton Court, &c. Beſides his dramatic performances, he was author of "The Tatler," which laid the foundation of that kind of periodical writing; he was alſo concerned with Addiſon in the Spectator, wrote part of the Guardian, and gave the world ſeveral remarkable political tracts.

To return to the theatres—Mrs. Oldfield, the moſt celebrated actreſs of her time, died in the year 1730; and Mrs. Porter, another great favourite of the town, being diſabled by a fall out of a chaiſe in the following year. Mr. Booth finding his own health on the decline, and his ſucceſs much leſſened by the loſs of two ſuch performers, ſold half his ſhare to a Mr. Highmore, for which (being a ſixth of the concern) he received 2,500*l.*—Mr. Highmore, in conſequence of a wager, appeared a few nights on the ſtage as an actor, but with no ſucceſs. About this time Mr. Wilkes died, and Mr. Cibber, not liking his new colleagues, Mr. Highmore and the widow Wilkes's deputy, appointed his ſon, the very famous and unfortunate Theophilus Cibber, to act in his ſtead; he, however, ſhortly after diſpoſed of his ſhare to Mr. Highmore for three thouſand guineas; and when Mr. Booth died, the remaining half of his ſhare was ſold by his widow to Mr. Giffard, Manager of a new theatre lately built in Goodman's Fields.

Mrs. Anne Oldfield, who as above-mentioned died this year, had long been a ſupporter of the

drama with great reputation—Mr. Farquhar introduced her to the ſtage, where her beauty and merit gained her many admirers. She firſt played Alinda in the Pilgrim, and her laſt part was Sophoniſba, in Thomſon's tragedy of that name; her great exertions in which were ſaid to be the cauſe of her death.

The year before Sir Richard Steele relinquiſhed theatrical management, died the celebrated Congreve, of whom, as formerly manager at Lincoln's Inn, and the Haymarket, it may be proper to take ſome notice—he was born in 1672 at Bardſa, near Leeds in Yorkſhire, but received his education in Dublin; he was afterwards a ſtudent at law in the Middle Temple, London; where his partiality for literary purſuits gaining the aſcendancy over thoſe of his profeſſion, he commenced author, and, at the age of ſeventeen, publiſhed a novel, called "The Incognita"—at twenty-one he produced the comedy of "The Old Bachelor," which Dryden declared to be the beſt *firſt* play he had ever ſeen—his next comedy was "*The Double Dealer*;" and as has been above related, he produced "Love for Love, the Mourning Bride, and the Way of the World," which laſt play cloſed his dramatic labours—a cataract in his eyes, and the tortures of the gout, embittered his latter days; and from an internal hurt received at Bath, in conſequence of his carriage being overturned, he died ſoon after (January 29, 1729) at his houſe in Surrey Street, Strand; was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey, where the Ducheſs of Marlborough erected a monument to his memory; it is ſaid he had bequeathed her 10,000l.

Whatever

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of Congreve's plays, it is remarkable that they were all written before the age of twenty-five; a time of life which, when added to the indelicate poetic licentia then granted, may certainly excuſe, in ſome meaſure, his defects.

When Collier publiſhed his ſevere attack on the immorality of the ſtage, Mr. Congreve publiſhed a very ſpirited and ingenious defence of it, which went as far as there was room for argument.

Lord Hallifax was Congreve's particular patron, who made him one of the Commiſſioners for licenſing Hackney Coaches, gave him a place in the Pipe Office, and that of Commiſſioner of Wine Licences, worth ſix hundred a year; he, conſequently was in good circumſtances during life, and, as before remarked, he died rich.

Cotemporary with him were Otway and Dryden; the former died April 14th, 1685, at the age of 24, after ſuffering the moſt terrible effects of indigence and miſery;—though no writer, perhaps Shakeſpeare not excepted, ever ſpoke more to the paſſions than he did. His plays are ten in number, The Orphan, and Venice Preſerved, ſpeak more for his genius than we have power to do; and we are ſorry to add, that whatever were his merits, poverty, and a broken heart, brought him to the grave. He was born at Trotting in Suſſex, in 1651.

Dryden, born in Auguſt, 1631, at Aldwincle in Northamptonſhire, began his education under Dr. Buſby at Weſtminſter, and completed it at Trinity College, Cambridge. The revolutions

of thoſe times compelled him to write in praiſe of Cromwell, and afterwards in praiſe of Charles; how far he was wrong in ſuch apparent inconſiſtency, or in afterwards changing his religion, we have not room to examine or determine. He wrote twenty-ſeven plays, few of which are ever performed; but his dramatic works are by no means the teſt of his genius, for the moſt admired of his productions are his theatrical critiques and political performances, particularly by his Abſalom and Achitophel, Religio Laici, Threnadia Auguſtalis, and his Hind and Panther; the latter publiſhed as an Apology for his turning Roman Catholic. At the advanced age of ſixty-ſix, he made his celebrated tranſlation of Virgil, and a year after publiſhed his Fables, among which was introduced his Ode to Cecilia's day. His death happened May 1, 1701.

At about the date where we quitted our ſtage recital, viz. 1732, died the poet Gay, who was born in 1688, and in 1712 made ſecretary to the Ducheſs of Monmouth. His poem on Rural Sports, firſt introduced him to a friendſhip with Mr. Pope, which continued till his death; this was followed by his "Shepherd's Week;" and in the year 1720, a publication of his poems, by ſubſcription, cleared him 1000l.—His much admired Fables were alſo very productive. His dramatic pieces were, "The What d'ye call It" —"Three Hours after Marriage"—The Captives," and that memorable piece of ſatire "The Beggars Opera," which was repeated ſixty-three ſucceſſive nights, with more applauſe than had ever been known before. A ſecond part of it, called

called "Polly," was publiſhed, but never acted, and though the profits amounted to more than one thouſand pounds, the diſappointment of its non-performance, is ſaid to have ſet very heavy on the mind of our poet, who died at the period above-mentioned, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey.

Having thus noticed ſome of the principal ſupports of the drama, as authors, we will recur to the actors, who in the year 1733 (it not being cuſtomary at that time, to make articles between manager and performer) revolted in great numbers from their new governor, Mr Highmore; this ſeceſſion was principally abetted and headed by Theophilus Cibber, who, with his party, having elegantly and expeditiouſly decorated the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, opened it to a crowded audience; while, for thirty weeks after, the neglected Highmore having ill ſupplied their places, his defective men continued to loſe ground, both in eſtimation and caſh. Macklin was the only actor of conſequence he had, and it is probable that, but for the abilities of that Father of the Stage, he would not have kept his houſe open at all. In order to repel the ſucceſs of his oppoſers, Mr. Highmore, by advice of his friends, put in force the vagrant act, and one Harper, an actor in the Haymarket company, was taken up and committed to Bridewell; but being a houſekeeper in Weſtminſter, and having a vote for members of parliament, he afterwards obtained a verdict in his favour from the Court of King's Bench, as not coming within the meaning of the act. The punctuallity with which Mr. Highmore fulfilled all his engage-

ments proved his ruin; for he was finally obliged to part with his property and intereſt in the theatre to Charles Fleetwood, Eſq. who, in the year 1734, purchaſed the whole patent for little more than Highmore had given for half of it. Fleetwood had come into an eſtate of ſix thouſand a year, the whole of which he had loſt by gaming, but found means, from his connections, to make the above purchaſe. The revolted company, whoſe buſineſs failing, were now ſick of their enterprize, and returned to their old theatre under Fleetwood, with whom they univerſally ſigned articles, ſtating their ſalaries, parts they were to play, &c.; this being the firſt inſtance of theatrical engagements made in legal form. Mr. Fleetwood deputed the management to Meſſrs. Theophilus Cibber and Macklin, with whom buſineſs went on tolerably well, notwithſtanding the parts formerly filled by Wilks, Cibber, and Booth, were now very indifferently performed. Mr. Norris the actor, known by the name of Jubilee Dicky, died this year, 1734.

In the year 1736, Mr. Quin made his firſt appearance, as did alſo Mr. Milward and the celebrated Mrs. Cibber, who, from being brought up a ſinger, diſcovered her abilities were ſuperior as an actreſs, and in that capacity appeared as Zara.

It was in this year that the prices of admiſſion were firſt occaſionally raiſed from thoſe laſt-mentioned, to five ſhillings for the boxes, three ſhillings the pit, two ſhillings the firſt gallery, and one ſhilling the ſecond; this alteration in price at firſt, was only made on the nights of a new grand patomime, or other expenſive ſpectacle;

but by degrees it was brought to a continuance, till the additional riſe made by the Drury Lane company, when performing at the Opera Houſe, in 1791; and by the proprietors of Covent Garden, on enlarging that houſe, in 1792.

In 1737 Mr. Beard made his debut at Drury Lane Theatre, as Sir John Loverule in "The Devil to Pay;" in the following year he married a daughter of the Earl of Waldegrave, and widow of Lord Edward Herbert; on this occaſion Mr. Beard left the ſtage, but as will be hereafter noticed, returned to it again in a few years. In 1738, Sir Robert Walpole brought a Bill into the Houſe, which after great oppoſition paſſed into a law, whereby the number of public Theatres were limited, and every dramatic compoſition, whether Play, Farce, Song, Addreſs, Prologue or Epilogue, were made ſubject to the Inſpectors of a Licence, on whoſe fiat and authority the works of every ſtage writer now in ſome meaſure depends; though with more propriety and proſpect of indulgence at that tribunal than at the managers; whoſe rejection or acceptance of pieces being guided principally by intereſt, partiality, or caprice, leaves an author (unleſs patronized) moſt terribly at their mercy. The above act was principally cauſed by the repreſentations of two pieces (written by that prince of novel writers, Henry Fielding,) called "Paſquin," and "The Hiſtorical Regiſter," the firſt in 1736, and the latter in 1737. The ſatire in thoſe Dramas was chiefly pointed againſt the adminiſtration of Sir Robert, who, as obſerved, retaliated by preventing the poſſibility of a future theatrical lampoon upon miniſters.

The

The Licenſing Act has moſt undoubtedly a number of points in its favour, but the monopoly of theatres under (as it were) two patents and *an half*, is a circumſtance much to be regretted; and if we may hazard an opinion, were there *more* theatres, and upon a ſmaller ſcale, were the ſalaries of actors in ſome caſes not ſo enormous and in others not ſo illiberally low, the public would be in every reſpect better ſerved than they even are at preſent. It would be neither a few authors, a few actors, or two or three managers, that could monopolize the favour of the town; a more extended field for ability in the two former claſſes, would render the latter leſs deſpotic; and the public would, in conſequence of the neceſſary emulation among a greater number of theatres, be treated with greater variety and more reſpect.

This year introduced Mr. Woodward to the ſtage, whoſe firſt appearance was ſaid to be in the character of Harlequin, he was not long, however, before he became admired in more dignified walks of the drama, as his Bobadil, Marplot, &c. &c. will teſtify.

In 1741, when, in conſequence of the Licenſing Act, the theatre in Goodman's-fields was opened as a Concert-room, and the play and farce performed *gratis*, as an evaſion of the law, our Britiſh Roſcius, David Garrick, made his firſt eſſay on a London ſtage, in the character of King Richard the Third; his amazing and well-known ſucceſs ſo much engaged the attention of the town, and attracted the jealouſy of the patentees, that by legal authority, Mr. Giffard was obliged to ſhut up his Theatrical Concert-room, that being the only means by which his opponents

nents could detach Mr. Garrick from him. Mr. Fleetwood the following ſeaſon engaged Mr. Garrick, who in 1747 bought a moiety of the patent, and continued at that theatre during the whole of his dramatic exiſtence.

Our Roſcius had been trying his abilities on the Ipſwich ſtage, prior to his appearance at Goodman's-fields, under the name of Lyddal, he was, however, no more than about three months e'er he reached the metropolis, where, with a *veni, vidi, vici*, he made an impreſſion on the feelings and opinions of his audience, the memory of which will never be eradicated.

The following was the caſt of the Merchant of Venice, at Covent Garden, in 1741:

Antonio	Mr. *Quin*
Baſſanio	Mr. *Milward*
Gratiano	Mr. *Mills*
Shylock	Mr. *Macklin*
Launcelot	Mr. *Chapman*
Gobbo	Mr. *Johnſon*
Salanio	Mr. *Bury*
Morochius	Mr. *Caſhell*
Lorenzo	Mr. *Havard*
Prince of Arragon . .	Mr. *Turbutt*
Duke	Mr. *Winſtone*
Tubal	Mr. *Tarwell*
Solarino	Mr. *Ridout*
Portia	Mrs. *Clive*
Narciſſa	Mrs. *Pritchard*
Jeſſica	Mrs. *Woodman*

In 1743 Mr. Fleetwood's pocket being much impaired, and his conſtitution weakened by violent attacks of the gout, his patent being moreover

over mortgaged, it was put up to ſale, and purchaſed by Meſſrs. Amber and Green, bankers, who nominated Mr. Lacy as manager. Mr. Lacy was originally in buſineſs at Norwich, but entering on theatricals, performed under Mr. Rich at Covent Garden; he had alſo been at the Haymarket, and was one of the firſt proprietors of Ranelagh. At this time he was aſſiſtant manager to Mr. Rich, whom he left on the propoſals of Meſſrs. Amber and Green, who offered him a third ſhare in the concern, for which he was to pay, when his part of the profits amounted to a ſufficiency for that purpoſe. —3,200 was paid for the patent, and Mr. Fleetwood was to receive ſix hundred a year till it expired.—The mortgage of ſeven thouſand pounds ſtill remaining, and the two bankers failing, it was not long before the patent was offered for ſale once more; when Meſſrs. Garrick and Lacy, by paying off the mortgage and other incumbrances, to the amount of twelve thouſand pounds, excluſive of Fleetwood's annuity, procured a new patent, commencing at the expiration of the old one, and the theatre opened under their joint management in 1747, with a prologue written by Dr. Johnſon:—the principal performers were Meſſrs. Garrick, Barry, Macklin, Delane, Sparkes, Berry Yates, Havard, Taſwell, W. Mills, &c. the ladies were Mrs. Cibber, Pritchard, Woffington, Clive, Macklin, Hippeſley (afterwards Mrs. Green, Minors, Pitt, (now living) Cherry, Bennet, Croſs, &c.; they had alſo as dancers, Mr. Cooke, Monſ. Grandchamps, Madam and Madamoiſelle Auretti.

At Covent Garden the company chiefly conſiſted

ſiſted of Meſſrs. Giffard, Beard, Ryan, Theophilus Cibber, Gibſon, Dunſtall, Lalauze, Bencraft, Stoppelaer, Oates, Leveridge, &c. with Mr. Rich as Harlequin, who, in the bills, went by the name of Lunn;—the famous Engliſh Ariſtophanes, Mr. Samuel Foote, who in this year gave occaſionally his Diverſions of the Morning at the Haymarket Theatre, was alſo a frequent auxiliary at Covent Garden. The ladies of that theatre were, Mrs. Giffard, Horton, Storer, Vincent, Young, Copin, Dunſtall, &c. the dancers, Villeneuve, Deſſe, &c. &c.

The ſucceſs of this company, when oppoſed to Garrick, at the head of ſo formidable a troop, was, as might be expected, very indifferent. Mr. Rich had alſo neglected to treat the town, as uſual, with one of thoſe novelties in the ſhape of pantomime, for which he was ſo famous; and Mr. Quin, who, as an actor, was the ſtaff of his company, had, on ſome diſguſt, retired to Bath.

On the other hand, the ſucceſs of the Drury-lane corps was great, and carried all before it. The year following, Dr. Johnſon's Tragedy of "Irene" was brought out at Drury-lane. The pantomime of "Apollo and Daphne," was performed with much ſucceſs at Covent Garden.

The year 1749 was the date of a riot at the Haymarket Theatre, which a company of French performers opened, and put the words—"*By Authority*," at the top of their advertiſement; and as ſeveral Engliſh performers at that time wanted bread, from the ſhutting up that very theatre, and the houſe in Goodman's-fields, it could not have been attempted more inopportunely. Mr. Victor, who, on the night of the diſturbance, was himſelf

himſelf in the pit, gives the following exact account of it:—

"People went early to the theatre, as a crowded houſe was certain—I was there in the center of the pit, where I ſoon perceived that we were viſited by two Weſtminſter Juſtices, Deveil and Manning. The leaders that had the conduct of the oppoſition were known to be there, one of whom called aloud for the ſong in praiſe of Engliſh Roaſt Beef, which was accordingly ſung in the gallery by a perſon prepared for that purpoſe; and the whole houſe, beſides joining in the chorus, ſaluted the cloſe with three huzzas!—This, Juſtice Deveil was pleaſed to ſay was a riot; upon which diſputes commenced directly, which were carried on with ſome degree of decency on both ſides. The Juſtice at firſt informed us, that he was come there as a magiſtrate, to maintain the King's authority; that Colonel Pulteney, with a full company of the guards, were without, to ſupport him in the execution of his office; that it was the King's command the play ſhould be acted; and that the obſtructing it was oppoſing the King's authority; and, if that was done, he muſt read the proclamation, after which all offenders would be ſecured directly by the guards in waiting. To all theſe moſt arbitrary threatenings, and this abuſe of his Majeſty's name, the reply was to the following effect:—That the audience had a legal right to ſhew their diſlike to any play or actor; that the judicature of the pit had been acknowledged and acquieſced to time immemorial; and, as the preſent ſet of actors were

" were to take their fate from the Public, they " were free to receive them as they pleaſed.

" By this time the hour of ſix drew near. The " French and Spaniſh Embaſſadors, with their " ladies, the late Lord and Lady Gage, and Sir " Thomas Robinſon, a Commiſſioner of the Ex- " ciſe, all appeared in the ſtage-box together.— " At that inſtant the curtain drew up, and diſ- " covered the actors ſtanding between two files " of grenadiers, with their bayonets fixed, and " reſting on their firelocks. At this the whole " pit roſe, and unanimouſly turned to the Juſtices, " who ſat in the middle of it, to demand the rea- " ſon of ſuch arbitrary proceedings?—The Juſ- " tices either knew nothing of the ſoldiers being " placed there, or elſe thought it ſafeſt to de- " clare ſo. At that declaration they demanded " of Juſtice Deveil (who had owned himſelf the " commanding officer in the affair) to order them " off the ſtage; he did ſo immediately, and they " diſappeared. Then began the ſerenade—not " only cat-calls, but all the various portable in- " ſtruments that could make a diſagreeable noiſe, " were brought upon this occaſion, and were " continually turning in all parts of the houſe; " and as an attempt at ſpeaking was ridiculous, " the actors retired, and they opened with a " grand dance of twelve men and twelve wo- " men; but even that was prepared for, and they " were directly ſaluted with a buſhel or two of " peas, which made their capering very unſafe. " After this, they attempted to open the comedy; " but had the actor the voice of thunder, it would " have been loſt in the confuſed ſtrains from a " thouſand various inſtruments. Here, at the

" waving Deveil's hat, all were ſilent, and (ſtand-
" ing up on his ſeat) he made a propoſal to the
" houſe to this effect:—That if they perſiſted in
" the oppoſition, he muſt read the proclamation;
" that if they would permit the play to go on, and
" to be acted through that night, he would promiſe,
" on his honour, to lay their diſlikes and reſent-
" ments before the King, and he doubted not
" but a ſpeedy end would be put to their acting.
" The anſwer to this propoſal was very ſhort,
" and very expreſſive:—*No treaties! No trea-*
" *ties!*—At this the Juſtice called for candles to
" read the proclamation, and ordered the guards
" to be in readineſs: but a gentleman ſeized Mr.
" Deveil's hand, ſtretched out for the candle;
" begged of him to conſider what he was going to
" do, for his own ſake, for ours, for the King's!
" That he ſaw the unanimous reſolution of the
" houſe; and that the appearance of ſoldiers in
" the pit would throw us all into a tumult, and
" muſt end with the lives of many. This earneſt
" remonſtrance made the Juſtice turn pale and
" paſſive. At this pauſe, the actors made a ſe-
" cond attempt to go on, and the uproar re-
" vived, which, continuing ſome time, the am-
" baſſadors and their ladies left their box, which
" occaſioned an univerſal huzza from the whole
" houſe; and, after calling ſometime for the
" curtain, down it fell."

The glorious independent ſpirit of a Britiſh audience was, perhaps, never exerted to better purpoſe, nor in a better cauſe than the above; may that auguſt tribunal of authors and actors ever remain the ſame! Jealous of its prerogative, and impatient of contempt, may it continue

to

raiſe merit and diffidence from the ignoble ſituations too frequently allotted them by *envy*, *prejudice*, or *ignorance*.

In the ſeaſon 1748-9, our preſent ſtage favourite, Mr. King, firſt appeared at Drury-Lane Theatre, in the *Herald*, in "King Lear." Mr. Garrick, however, did not at that time diſcover his merit, and he played little or nothing till the year following, when he performed George Barnwell to Mrs. Pritchard's Millwood; and alſo, Valerius, in "The Roman Father." He was at the end of the ſeaſon 1749, engaged on liberal terms, by Mr. Sheridan, to go to Dublin, where he continued till two years after Mr. Woodward's leaving Drury Lane.

It may be here obſerved, that Mr. Garrick, from ſome cauſe undefinable, was certainly very ſlow in diſcovering the abilities of his performers, as was evident not only in the caſe of Mr. King, but in that of Henderſon, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Siddons, and ſeveral others, who afterwards proved the moſt valuable acquiſitions to the Engliſh ſtage.

At Covent Garden this ſeaſon, Mr. Quin returned to the ſtage; Mr. Sparks, Mr. Arthur, Miſs Pitt, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Woffington, were engaged from Drury Lane. Miſs Bellamy came to Covent Garden this year, and opened in the part of Belvidere. "Coriolanus," by the poet Thomſon, was this year produced, as alſo the celebrated pantomime ſpectacle of "Perſeus and Andromeda." The year 1749 was alſo remarkable for the celebrated impoſition of the Quart Bottle Conjuror, which circumſtance is too well known to need a relation here. Mr. Rich profited of it, by

introducing it at Covent Garden as a pantomimic trick, which was remarkably ſucceſsful and productive. Mr. Quin, the ſpring of the ſame year, had the honour to direct the getting up of Addiſon's tragedy of "Cato," the parts of which were performed by the younger branches of the Royal Family.

In 1750, Mrs. Ward left Mr. Rich to go to Mr. Garrick. Mr. Mattocks made his firſt appearance in the entertainment of "The Chaplet." Mr. Beard and Miſs Norris gained conſiderable reputation in "King Arthur," and ſeveral other muſical pieces.

Nothing very material took place this ſeaſon at Covent Garden, except the engagement of the famous wire-dancing Tucker, which, though it brought Mr. Rich a number of good houſes, gave ſo much offence to Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington, that they would not play on the nights of his performance; a conduct, in our opinion, truly prepoſterous; for as the above performer was ſimply introduced in the courſe of a pantomime ("The Fair,") which the public approved, it certainly was not their province to decide on the propriety of his engagement.

In 1751, Miſs Bellamy left Covent Garden for Drury Lane, at which houſe Mr. Woodward brought out Queen Mab, which was very ſucceſsful, and ſeemed to ſtand fair with the pantomimes at the other houſe. A caricature in conſequence made its appearance, called "The Steelyards," in which Quin, Barry, Woffington, and Cibber, were repreſented as fairly outweighed by Woodward and his pantomime.—Mr. Shuter came very forward this year at Drury Lane, as

alſo

alſo a Mr. John Palmer, who, in the courſe of ſome time after, married Miſs Pritchard.

Mr. Barry, in this ſeaſon, left Garrick for Covent Garden; and Mr. Cibber, after having retired a year, returned to the ſtage of that theatre. The veteran Macklin and his wife (together with Mrs. Elmy) came to Covent Garden from Dublin. Quin, after refuſing the ſolicitations of Mr. Garrick to leave Mr. Rich, engaged with the latter for a ſalary of one thouſand pounds a year, the greateſt ſalary at that time ever known, and in very few inſtances at preſent.—Romeo and Juliet was run at both houſes, againſt each other, with various ſucceſs.

Mr. Quin, notwithſtanding the above-mentioned engagement, acted his laſt character, as a regular engaged performer, on May the 20th: it was Horatio, in the Fair Penitent—Mr. Barry played Lothario, and Mrs. Cibber Caliſta.—His Royal Highneſs Frederick Prince of Wales died in March this year, when the theatres were ſhut up three weeks.

At the commencement of this ſeaſon, 1752, Mrs. Woffington quitted Covent Garden for Dublin, where her great ſucceſs engaged the manager of that theatre to double her ſalary of four hundred pounds for the firſt ſeaſon, on her remaining two ſeaſons more; beſides which, ſhe had two benefits each year.

Mr. Dexter made his entree this ſeaſon at Drury Lane, and gained great credit in the character of Oronooko; but though his performance of that character led the public to ſuppoſe him capable of ſtanding as a rival to Barry, it is re-

markable that he failed in every other attempt; and, after being ſome time laid on the ſhelf, returned to Dublin. Meſſrs. Moſſop and Roſs joined the Drury Lane corps, to which they were a conſiderable addition. Mr. Moſſop firſt played Richard III. and afterwards Zanga. Mr. Roſs made his debut in Young Bevil. They were both highly approved.

Mr. Wilder, who afterwards played Macheath forty nights in Dublin, came from Covent Garden to Drury Lane.—This gentleman is about 70 years old, and poſſeſſes ſtrong muſical powers at this period.

The celebrated Mr. Joſeph Vernon, (then a boy,) made his appearance this year in the Shepherd's Lottery, a muſical piece. Mr. Woodward got much credit in Bobadil and Harlequin Ranger.

At Covent Garden, Mr. Quin, who had the ſeaſon before retired from the ſtage, came from Bath to play Falſtaff for the benefit of Mr. Ryan. This piece of ſervice he repeated the two following ſeaſons; but after that made Mr. Ryan a preſent in lieu, (and when he died, bequeathed him a legacy, declaring, that he grew infirm, and would not WHISTLE the character of Falſtaff for any man. It was this eccentric actor who having, in 1747, retired to Bath on ſome difference with his manager, Mr. Rich, and afterwards wiſhing to meet Mr. R. *part* of the way towards a reconciliation, wrote him the following laconic billet:

"RICH—I am at Bath. "QUIN."

To

To which he received the following anſwer:

"QUIN—Stay there and be d——d."

"RICH."

Mr. Rich revived the pantomime of Dr. Fauſtus, and in February, after the promiſe of ſeveral years, brought forward his admirable pantomime of "The Sorcerer," which was certainly his *coup de maitre*, and brought, for many ſucceeding ſeaſons, an immenſity of money.

To avoid a confuſion of dates, and the charge of being incorrect, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that every ſeaſon, by beginning about September, makes a part of two different years; and as the latter always conſtitutes the greateſt part of the ſeaſon, we have hitherto (and mean to do in the ſucceeding pages) denominated the whole ſeaſon from its ſecond year, as in the laſt-mentioned, viz. 1752, where incidents relative to the early part of that ſeaſon muſt have happened towards the cloſe of the year 1751.

In the ſeaſon of 1753, "Eugenia," tranſlated from the French by Mr. Francis, was brought out, but diſapproved of. Mr. Foote's farce of "Taſte," alſo came out; the prologue by Garrick, and the part of Lady Pentweazle was performed by a Mr. Worſendale, with much humour. The pantomime of "The Genii," was produced, and a tragedy called "The Brothers," by Dr. Young, who gave the profits of his three nights to a public charity; but the amount not being equal to what he expected, he liberally added ſufficient to the ſum to make it one thouſand pounds. Mr. Macklin this year took leave of the audience, on a plan of retirement; which

not

not ſucceeding, he afterwards returned to the ſtage.

Mr. Barry and Mrs. Cibber drew great houſes at Covent Garden; but unleſs they played, the receipts were but indifferent. A Mrs. Bland was engaged from Dublin; and Mr. Giffard, jun. made his appearance in the part of King Lear—an unſucceſsful undertaking, and perhaps a raſh one, when it is conſidered that Garrick was the Lear at Drury Lane. To aid his dances and pantomimes, Mr. Rich engaged Signor Maraneſi and Signora Bugiani, two excellent dancers. "The Fair," was revived, to introduce the famous Mr. Madox on the wire.

Mr. Smith made his theatrical entree this year, in the character of Theodoſius, which he acted four ſucceſſive nights, with wonderful applauſe. Mr. Jones (an Iriſh bricklayer) wrote the tragedy of "The Earl of Eſſex," which had a conſiderable run, and received particular embelliſhment from the wonderful acting of Barry and Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Bland alſo raiſed herſelf into eſtimation, by her performance of the Counteſs.

Miſs Macklin and her mother were, in 1754, engaged from Covent Garden by Mr. Garrick. Miſs Macklin was a favourite actreſs, but ſome time after retired from the ſtage with a reſpectable ſufficiency, which ſhe poſſeſſed till her death.

The ſame year introduced that heroine of the ſtage, Mrs. Yates, who came out in Marcia, in the tragedy of "Virginius." The lady's name at that time was Graham. Mr. Garrick (in conformity with a remark made ſome pages back) did not approve of her performances, and ſhe was in conſequence, at that time, diſmiſſed.—

However

However it afterwards ſo happened, that in conſequence of Mrs. Cibber's indiſpoſition, King David was obliged to ſolicit Mrs. Graham's aſſiſtance, and thereby produced a flower to the theatrical paſture, which (as far as it depended on his penetration) muſt otherwiſe have been doomed to

"Waſte its ſweetneſs in the deſert air."

The tragedy of "Creuſa" came out that ſeaſon, remarkable for its double epilogue, ſpoken by Mrs. Pritchard and Miſs Houghton; the farce of "The Knights," written by Mr. Foote; and the pantomime of "Fortunatus," by Mr. Woodward, were alſo brought forward.

Miſs Noſſiter appeared at Covent Garden in Juliet, which the laſt ſeaſon, and for years before, had been performed by Mrs. Cibber. Mr. Barry, in an occaſional prologue, thus introduced his new Juliet to the public, at the ſame time referring to his loſs of Mrs. Cibber:—

"In ſuch ſad plight, what could poor Romeo do,
"Why, faith, like modern lovers, ſeek a-new;
"And happy ſhall I think me in my choice,
"If ſhe's approv'd of by the public voice."

Miſs Noſſiter was very young, handſome, and poſſeſſed of a very genteel income. What added to the points in "Romeo and Juliet," principally was, that Barry and ſhe were really and mutually in love; which circumſtance was well known. The ſecond part ſhe played was Belvidera; the next Rutland, and afterwards Philoclea, in the tragedy of that name, written on purpoſe for her by Macnamara Morgan; but though the play was very

very ably ſupported by the additional exertions of Meſſrs. Barry and Smith, it was very ſhortly laid aſide from the cool reception it always met. Miſs Bellamy returned to this theatre from Drury-Lane; the play of "Conſtantine" was brought out, and ſhared the ſame, or rather a worſe fate than "Philoclea."

Italian burlettas were this ſeaſon produced at Covent Garden, in one of which Signora Nicolina became a very great favourite with the audience, and was afterwards moſt generally known by the name of *Spiletta*, which was that of the part ſhe played.

"Barbaroſſa" was produced, and "Coriolanus" revived, at Drury-lane, in the ſeaſon of 1755. "The Chances" had alſo a prodigious run, owing to the united abilities of Mr. Garrick in Don John, Mr. Yates in Antonio, and Mrs. Clive in the Mother of Conſtantia. An opera, called "The Fairies," taken from Shakeſpeare's "*Midſummer Night's Dream*," was alſo a favourite, and diſplayed the vocal powers of Giordani and Paſſerini. The pantomime for this ſeaſon was "Harlequin Mercury."

Mr. Sheridan being obliged to leave Dublin, in conſequence of a riot (which alſo occaſioned Mrs. Woffington's departure from Ireland) came over to England, and was engaged by Mr. Rich, at Covent Garden, from where Barry went over to Dublin, to replace Mr. Sheridan, at a ſalary of eight hundred pounds a year, and two benefits. Mrs. Green made her firſt appearance in London this ſeaſon, and proved afterwards, in ſuch parts as Mrs. Heidelberg, &c. inferior to none but Mrs. Clive. Mr. Murphy, well known

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in the literary walks of the drama, came out in Othello, which he played three nights with indifferent ſucceſs. Mr. Cibber and Mrs. Woffington played Doctor Wolf and Maria, in "The Nonjuror;" the firſt after an abſence of four, and the latter of three years. Mr. Sheridan's firſt appearance was in "Hamlet." At this period it was not cuſtomary, on the firſt run of a new play, or ſometimes of a revived one, to adverтiſe any farce or other entertainment with it, the novelty being conſidered ſufficient in itſelf. "Phædra and Hippolitus," "Coriolanus," &c. were revived this year; another play, on the ſtory of the Roman Father, called "Appius," was brought out, but not very ſucceſsful. Mr. Clarke firſt came on the ſtage as Oſmyn, in "Zara;" a Mrs. Glen appeared in the character of Rutland; and Mr. Poitier, a celebrated dancer, was engaged from Paris.

In 1756, Mr. Moſſop went over to Dublin, and Garrick engaged Mr. Murphy in his place. Mr Holland played his firſt character, Oroonoko, to Mrs. Cibber's Imoinda; this was a good actor; his only fault was, at times, being inclined to rant too much. He died univerſally regretted, in the bloom and meridian of youth. A number of revivals were introduced the beginning of this ſeaſon, which rendered the cloſe of the year 1755 famous for the celebrated riot on account of the Chineſe feſtival, which, though advertiſed by "Command of his Majeſty King George the Second," was not ſuffered to be decently performed, the body of the people being angry at the introduction of ſo many foreigners. That the public of the preſent day may judge on how grand

grand and extenſive a ſcale this ſpectacle was got up, we ſubjoin the following authentic Bill of Fare for the evening:—

By His Majeſty's Command.

THEATRE-ROYAL, IN DRURY LANE,

This preſent Saturday, being the 8th of Nov. 1755, will be preſented a Comedy, called

THE FAIR QUAKER OF DEAL.

Beau Mizen by Mr. Woodward.
Commodore Flip by Mr. Yates.
Arabella Zeal by Miſs Macklin.
Belinda by Miſs Haughton.
The Fair Quaker by Mrs. Davis.

To which will be added a new Grand Entertainment of Dancing, called

THE CHINESE FESTIVAL.

Compoſed by Mr. Noverre.

THE CHARACTERS BY

Monſ. Delaiſtre,
Sig. Baletti, Mr. Lauchery,

Mr. Novere, jun.	Monſ. Le Clerc,
Mr. Dinniſon,	Mr. Harriſon,
Monſ. St. Leger,	Mr. Granier,
Mr. Shawforth,	Mr. Hurſt,
Mr. Mathews,	Monſ. Sarney,
Monſ. Pochee,	Mr. Walker,

Mrs. Vernon, *Miſs Noverre*,

Mr. Morris,	Mr. Walker,
Mr. Booker,	Sig. Pietro,
Mr. Sturt,	Mrs. Addiſon,
Mr. Atkins,	Mrs. Noverre,
Mr. Ackman,	Mrs. Gibbons,

Mad.

Mad. Charon,	Mad. Nouend,
Mad. Nouſſelet,	Mrs. Phillips,
Mrs. Preſton,	Mrs. Lawſon,
Little Pietro,	*Miſs Noverre,*
Maſter Simpſon,	Miſs Bride,
Maſter Pope,	Miſs Popling,
Maſter Blagden,	Miſs Simpſon,
Maſter Hurſt,	Miſs Heath,
Maſter Spilſbury,	
Mr. Scrace,	Mr. Clough,
Mr. Ackman,	Mr. Allen,
Mr. Jefferſon,	Mr. Gray,
Mr. Burton,	Mrs. Bradſhaw,
Mr. Mare,	Mrs. Hippiſley,
Mr. Vaughan,	Mrs. Matthews,
Mr. Champneſs,	Mrs. Simſon—and
Mr. Bulbrick,	Miſs Mills.

With new Muſic, Scenes, Machines, Habits, and other Decorations.

Boxes 5s.—Pit 3s.—1ſt Gal. 2s.—Up. Gal. 1s.

Places for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Varney, at the Stage Door of the Theatre.

No Perſon can poſſibly be admitted behind the Scenes, or into the Orcheſtra.

Nothing under Full Price will be taken during the whole Performance.

This ſuperb exhibition, which was (owing to the Royal preſence) merely *ſuffered*, and that was all, was repeated on Wedneſday, Nov. 12, with violent contentions on the parts of its ſupporters and oppoſers; but being adverti ſed for the Tueſday following, Nov. 18, the riot was at that evening ſo great, that the houſe had nearly fallen

a ſacrifice. The play was "Eſſex," which character was performed by Mr. Murphy. After the tragedy, the oppoſition began; the Nobility even went ſo far as to draw their ſwords in favour of the piece; but all would not do; it was neceſſary, after much miſchief and damage, to lay it aſide. Mr. Garrick, ſome few nights after, appearing in the part of Archer, was called on to aſk pardon of the oppoſition party; but he firmly repreſented to them the injuries his property had ſuffered; and that, ſo far from aſking pardon, he aſſured them (after acknowledging all favours received) that, "unleſs he was that night permitted to "perform his duty to the beſt of his abilities, "he was above want, ſuperior to inſult, and "would never—*never* appear upon the ſtage "again!"—This addreſs at once aſtoniſhed and convinced the audience, who, after a pauſe truly critical, burſt into a ſhout of applauſe, which did juſtice to Mr. Garrick, and to their own feelings.

Mr. Barry returned to Covent Garden this ſeaſon, and with him Miſs Noſſiter: Mr. Sheridan's engagement was not renewed. Mr. Foote produced his farce of "The Engliſhman returned from Paris," in which he played; and on the nights of it, which were very ſucceſsful, ſhared the profits (as author and actor) with Mr. Rich. The ſeaſon cloſed with "The Conſtant Couple," and "Orpheus." The play was generally made uſe of as a climax to every ſeaſon, on account of the excellence of Mrs. Woffington in the part of Sir Harry Wildair.

In the ſeaſon of 1757, Mr. Moſſop returned to Drury Lane. Miſs Pritchard made her appear-

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ance in Juliet, and was wonderfully received. Mrs. Pritchard played Lady Capulet on the occaſion, which made the play truly intereſting.—The new pieces produced were "The Repriſal," "The Male Coquette," (written by Garrick) and the pantomime of "Proteus, or Harlequin in China," by Mr. Woodward.

At Covent Garden, "The Humorous Lieutenant," and "Wit without Money," two plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, were revived. Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of "The Rover," was produced. The comedy of "The London Cuckolds" was performed on Lord Mayor's Day, for the laſt time, it having heretofore been a particular cuſtom to adopt that play on the 9th of November.—Mrs. Gregory, a favourite actreſs in Dublin, came over to play a few nights at Covent Garden: Caliſta, and Hermione, were her principal characters; ſhe was moſt ſucceſsful in the former.—Mrs. Stot, afterwards Leſſingham, appeared in Deſdemona, but did not, at that time, continue on the ſtage. "The Rape of Proſerpine" was this year brought out by Mr. Rich. On the 28th of March, Mr. Wilkinſon (now, and many years ſince manager of the Theatres Royal York, Hull, &c.) made his *entre* in the character of the Fine Gentleman, in "Lethe," for Mr. Shuter's benefit. On the 17th of May, the celebrated Mrs. Woffington played Roſalind, during which performance ſhe frequently complained of indiſpoſition, but proceeded ſo far as to have nearly finiſhed the epilogue ſpeech, when her voice ſuddenly faultered; ſhe attempted in vain to recover herſelf; and ſuddenly ſcreaming—"O God!—O God!" ſhe

was carried off the ſtage in a fit of inſenſibility. Her life was deſpaired of; ſhe however lived three years, but never played after the above night. By her profeſſional emoluments, and through the liberality of Colonel Cæſar, of the Guards, Mrs. Woffington died in affluence: by mutual agreement, which ever died firſt, herſelf or the Colonel, was to leave every thing to the ſurvivor: but Mrs. Woffington ungenerouſly deceived her protector, and, by a ſubſequent will, privately made, left all her property to her ſiſter, a Mrs. Cholmondely.

Mrs. Woffington was a beautiful woman, and an elegant actreſs in genteel comedy; ſhe was ever attentive to her buſineſs on the ſtage, never was known to plead illneſs as an excuſe for non-attendance; and though as great at that time in her line of acting as the Siddons, Farren, or Jordan of the preſent day, ſhe generally played four times a week, and *never refuſed to perform at a benefit, though for the loweſt actor in the theatre.* Indeed, great actors were at that time ſo ready to oblige their brethren, that, according to Wilkinſon, Mr. Garrick acted every year for the benefits of nearly all the performers. Mr. Foote's farce of "The Author" was produced this ſeaſon with particular approbation.

In 1758, Mr. Fleetwood, eldeſt ſon of the late manager Fleetwood, came out in Romeo, and afterwards played Young Bevil; but not ſucceeding to his wiſh, he quitted the ſtage, and afterwards made a conſiderable fortune in the Weſt Indies.

Mr. Theophilus Cibber, whom we have ſo frequently mentioned as an actor and manager,

was

this year moſt unfortunately caſt away in his paſſage to Ireland, in conſequence of which misfortune he loſt his wife, as did alſo ſeveral other performers, and Mr. Madox, who, as above-mentioned, was ſo celebrated for his performance on the wire. Mr. Woodward, accompanied by Mr. Barry, Mr. and Mrs. Walker, Mr. Jefferſon, and Mr. Vernon, left their reſpective engagements at the two theatres, and went over to Dublin, on a ſcheme in which Woodward and Barry were managers. How far it ſucceeded will hereafter be related.

In 1759 Mr. Moody was engaged by Mr. Garrick, from Portſmouth, and made his firſt appearance in London in the character of King Henry the Eighth. Mr. King returned from Dublin, and played Tom in "The Conſcious Lovers, for his firſt character. Miſs Pope (who had before performed when a child) made her regular *entre*, as an eſtabliſhed actreſs, in the part of Corinna in "The Confederacy." Mr. Foote gave comic imitative Lectures this year at the Haymarket.

Nothing material occurred this ſeaſon at Covent Garden.

About this period, "High Life Below Stairs," and "The Minor," were produced; and in 1760 the latter piece was performed at both houſes.—Mr. Wilkinſon (whoſe articles at Drury Lane being expired) was ſet up at Covent Garden in competition with Mr. Foote, of whom he gave excellent Imitations.

The novelties at Drury Lane were Macklin's comedy of "The Married Libertine," and farce of "Love A-la-Mode;" alſo, Dr. Arne's opera

of "Thomas and Sally." Both theatres were ſhut up three weeks, from the 25th of October, on account of the death of his Majeſty King George the Second.

In 1761 and 2, a ſplendid repreſentation of the Coronation was got up by Mr. Rich, and an inferior one at Drury Lane. During the run of this ſpectacle, Mr. Rich died, and was ſucceeded in the management by Mr. Beard. The character of Mr. Rich, as a manager, was generally held in particular veneration by his performers.

In October, 1762, Miſs Catley made her firſt appearance at Covent Garden, in the Paſtoral Nymph, in "Comus."—We ſhall hereafter give further particulars of this lady.

In 1763, Mr. Garrick being in Italy, Mr. Powell appeared at Drury Lane, and gained wonderful applauſe, in a variety of characters. This gentleman afterwards purchaſed a part of the Covent Garden Patent. "The Mayor of Garrat," by Foote, came out this ſeaſon, which was alſo marked by the return of Mr. Woodward to Covent Garden, after an abſence of four years. It was upon this occaſion he ſpoke his celebrated prologue of "The Prodigal returned to London," which ſo much (and indeed juſtly) offended the Dublin audience, that, on his return to that city in the following year, he found it not only dangerous to attempt playing, but even to appear in the ſtreets, and in conſequence returned immediately to England. Mr. Bickerſtaff, about this time, produced ſeveral pieces, which ſucceeded as well as his "Love in a Village" had done in the year 1762. Mr. Charles Dibdin commenced his career as a dramatic author and compoſer in

1765,

1765, by bringing out "The Shepherd's Artifice."

In February, 1766, Mr. Foote being at a nobleman's ſeat in Hampſhire, had the misfortune to break his leg in hunting, and was obliged to have it amputated. To alleviate his diſtreſs under ſo heavy a misfortune, his Royal Highneſs, the then Duke of York, who was with him when the accident happened, procured for him, in July following, a patent for life, to perform from the 15th of May to the 15th of September every year. The Little Theatre being greatly out of repair, was the next year rebuilt, and ſince called, "The Theatre Royal, in the Haymarket."

In 1767, Mr. Powell was invited by the late Mr. Colman, ſen. to purchaſe the Covent Garden Patent jointly with Meſſrs. Harris and Rutherford: the price they paid the family of Mr. Rich was 60,000 pounds; and Powell, breaking through his articles with the Drury Lane managers, continued to act at Covent Garden till his death, which happened in June, 1769.

In 1768, Mrs. Pritchard retired from the ſtage. This lady had long been an ornament to her profeſſion, and boaſted an intimacy, when young, with the celebrated Mrs. Bracegirdle, who, as an actreſs, had charmed the preceding age. Mrs. Pritchard was particularly proud of a part written by that lady's hand, (Clariſſa, in "The Confederacy." Mrs. Bracegirdle and a Mrs. Barry were many years ago the chief ſupports of a benefit play for the famous actor Betterton, who was then, at the age of ſeventy-five, involved in poverty and diſtreſs. The inimitable Mrs. Clive and Mr. Havard alſo retired in 1768.

Mrs.

Mrs. Clive was the daughter of Mr. William Raftor, of Kilkenny, in Ireland, who loſt his property from his attachment to King James the Second, whom he followed to France after the battle of the Boyne. He afterwards gained a pardon, and returned to England, married, and his daughter Catharine was born in 1711. As ſhe grew up, her intimacy with a Miſs Johnſon (afterwards married to Mr. Theophilus Cibber) introduced her to that gentleman, who recommended her to the Laureat, by whom ſhe was engaged at twenty ſhillings per week. Her firſt appearance was in the character of a page, in the tragedy of "Mithridates;" in which ſhe ſung a ſong with much applauſe. In 1732, ſhe married Mr. G. Clive, ſon to Baron Clive; and her theatrical ſucceſs very rapidly raiſed her to the reputation ſhe will ever be remembered for.

In 1769, Mr. Garrick projected a Jubilee, in honour of Shakſpeare, for conducting which he was himſelf appointed Steward.

Stratford upon Avon, the birth-place of our immortal Bard, was appointed for its celebration: for which purpoſe a great booth was erected, which was called, "*Shakſpeare's Hall*, or *the Amphitheatre*." It was an elegant room, of the ſhape, but not ſo large, as the Rotunda at Ranelagh, ſupported by a colonade of the Corinthian order, diſtant about ten feet from the ſides, and having a chandelier of eight hundred lights hanging from the center of the roof.

The month fixed for this celebrity was Auguſt; yet ſo unfavourable was the weather, that the rain for two ſucceſſive days, which were aſſigned for this feſtival, prevented an intended pageant or

proceſſion

proceſſion of Shakſpeare's characters, on which much pains and expence had been beſtowed. The other entertainments were, a maſqued ball, the Oratorio of Judith, and an Ode on the occaſion from the pen of Mr. Garrick himſelf, of which the parts uſually ſung in recitative were ſpoken by him with all the energy and force which his enthuſiaſtic love of the illuſtrious Poet might be ſuppoſed to admit or inſpire; ſo that what has been frequently found inſipid and tireſome in things of this kind, became the principal part of this entertainment. The great merit of this Ode was its being adapted to the time, to the occaſion, and to the ſpeaker. Mr. Garrick conceived a peculiar manner which was to accompany his elocutions in particular parts of this performance, and the words correſponded in their firſt conception with this manner, and with particular tones, inflexions, and emphaſis, of which our Roſcious well knew the power. In a word, it was acknowledged, that Mr. Garrick's elocution was never heard with more pleaſure, or felt with more force.

Hitherto no pecuniary advantage had been derived to the profit of him who projected this honourable teſtimony to the memory of Shakſpeare. It is, however, natural to ſuppoſe, that a man who ever paid ſo much attention to his intereſt, would not miſs ſo fair an opportunity of levying a contribution on the avidity, which the accounts induſtriouſly circulated of this feſtival had excited in the public to ſee ſo uncommon a ſpectacle. Covent Garden had decidedly borne the bell on account of the Coronation proceſſion; and Drury Lane bid very fair to do it

in

in the preſent inſtance. The carrying the Jubilee down to Stratford, ſerved to heighten the curioſity of the London audience; at the ſame time it ſecured their ſanction and reception of it the winter following. The manager of Covent Garden, however, in his piece called "Man and Wife, foreſtalled the Pageant; but, in 1770, the *original* and *true Jubilee* carried all before it at Drury Lane, and the run was beyond any thing at that time recorded in the annals of the theatre. The muſic, on this occaſion, was compoſed by Mr. Dibdin.

The Jubilee of Shakſpeare has ſo cloſe a connection with the Hiſtory of the Stage, that we conceive ourſelves under no neceſſity of apologizing for being thus circumſtantial in our account of it, which is copied from a work of authentic reſpectability publiſhed nearly about the time of the Jubilee's coming out at Drury Lane.

In the year 1771, Mr. Foote brought forward "The Maid of Bath" at the Haymarket Theatre, with a prologue written by Mr. Garrick.—At Drury Lane, "The Inſtitution of the Garter" was produced; the muſic by Mr. Dibdin.—"Lethe" was revived, with alterations, and ſeveral pieces of Mr. Cumberland's, particularly "The Faſhionable Lover," came out.—The Patentees of Covent Garden, at the commencement of this ſeaſon, had a diſpute on account of a Lady neglected by Mr. Colman, and protected by Mr Harris; but the latter finding occaſion to withdraw his ſupport, the difference of courſe terminated. "The Fairy Prince" was brought out, and ſucceeded, in oppoſition to "The Inſtitution of the Garter,

The

The novelties of the Haymarket Theatre, in the year 1772, were "The Cooper," "Cupid's Revenge," and "The Nabob." At the end of this ſeaſon, Mr. Foote, in conſequence of the length of ſeaſon taken by the winter proprietors, ſtuck up the following notice in the Green Room, which, from a miſapprehenſion of its real meaning, cauſed many of the performers to look on it as a very ſerious matter:

"*September* 15, 1772.

"As it is uncertain to what length the Manager of Drury Lane Theatre may protract his "enſuing ſeaſon, or what foreign artiſts, beſides "his friend *Torre*, he may import next ſummer "into this country, for *correcting its morals* and "improving its taſte, Mr. Foote dares not riſk "entering into any future engagement with his "preſent performers.

"He thanks them for their aſſiſtance, wiſhes "them ſucceſs, and will think himſelf happy to "be uſeful to them upon any occaſion."

At Drury Lane, in 1772 and 1773, "The Iriſh Widow," a pantomime, called "The Pigmy Revels," compoſed by Dibdin; a tragedy, called "Alonzo," by Home; a comedy, called "The Maid of Kent," by Mr. Waldron, and "The Wedding Ring," (by Dibdin) were produced. In conſequence of a report circulated that Mr. Bickerſtaff was author of "The Wedding Ring," Mr. Dibdin found himſelf obliged to make an affidavit to the contrary. A ſerious oppoſition, however, took place, and Mr. D. was finally under the neceſſity of coming forward, and declaring

claring to the audience, that he was himſelf the author and compoſer of the words and muſic.

Covent Garden produced, at the opening, a promiſing acquiſition to the ſtage in the perſon of Miſs Barſanti (afterwards married to Mr. Daly, manager at Dublin, and ſince dead); a prelude was written by Mr. Colman for her introduction. The moſt fortunate literary novelties of the ſeaſon were Dr. Goldſmith's comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer," (for the ſucceſs of which many doubts were entertained); "Elfrida," "Croſs Purpoſes," "The Golden Pippin," "Alzuma," and "King Henry the Second, or the Fall of Roſamond," by Mr. Hull.

Mr. Foote opened the Haymarket Theatre with a long-promiſed *Puppet-ſhew*, which had ſo much attraction, that there was not even room for the band of muſic to remain in the orcheſtra. Our Ariſtophanes opened the entertainment with a comic and well-written exordium, tending to prove the antiquity and ſuperiority of puppet-ſhews over the regular drama, and tracing its origin and progreſs through the earlieſt ages of Rome, Egypt, and Greece, and in proceeding to modern days, ſeveral neat and well-managed points of ſatire were introduced on the then ſtyle of acting. The addreſs concluded, after telling the following little ſtory:

"Permit me to deſire you will profit by the "error of a Raw Country Girl.

"Being brought by her friends, for the firſt "time, to a Puppet-ſhew, ſhe was ſo ſtruck with "the ſpirit and truth of the imitation, that it "was ſcarce poſſible to convince her but all the

"puppets

" puppets were players.—Being carried the ſuc-
" ceeding night to one of the Theatres, it be-
" came equally difficult to ſatisfy her but that
" all the players were puppets."

The dramatic pieces produced were "Piety in Pattens," "The Bankrupt," "A Trip to Portſmouth," "The Pantomimites," "The Macaroni," and "The Modiſh Wife."

In 1773-4, Mr. Dibdin brought out "The Deſerter," and "Chriſtmas Tale," at Drury Lane: Mr. Garrick revived the Maſque of "Alfred;" "The Note of Hand," by Mr. Cumberland, and "School for Wives," by Kelly, were alſo produced.

Mr. William Thomas Lewis, the preſent Acting Manager at Covent Garden, made his firſt appearance at that theatre in this ſeaſon.—His entré was in the part of Belcour, in which, and, indeed, in whatever elſe he has undertaken, he acquitted himſelf with merited approbation and unbounded applauſe.

Mr. Macklin's performance of Macbeth (on which occaſion the characters were firſt dreſſed in Highland Coſtume,) in the beginning of the ſeaſon gave riſe to a long and bitter conteſt between him and Meſſrs. Sparks and Reddiſh, in conſequence of Mr. Macklin having declared that thoſe Gentlemen went into the gallery on purpoſe to hiſs him:—various affidavits, addreſſes, and appeals, paſſed on both ſides. Mr. M. played four nights with encreaſed oppoſition; and afterwards, when he was advertiſed for Shylock, Mr. Colman was obliged to go forward to the audience, and pro-

miſe that Mr. Macklin ſhould be diſmiſſed the Theatre.—We ſhall hereafter give an account of the termination of this buſineſs, which was finally much to Mr. Macklin's honour.

The new pieces this year were "The Duelliſt," "Achilles in Petticoats," (revived and altered from Gay,) "The Sylphs," a pantomime, and Mr. Colman's comedy of "The Man of Buſineſs."

Little occurred at the Haymarket in 1774, but the production of "The Cozeners," a comedy, by Foote, and "The Waterman," a ballad farce, by Dibdin.

Drury Lane opened with "The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting," a prelude written on purpoſe for the commencement. Mr. Yates appeared, after eight years abſence from Drury Lane, in a revived tragedy, called "Electra:"—A variety of other novelties were produced, the moſt prominent of which were the "Maid of the Oaks," (the ſcenery for which coſt 1500l.) "The Choleric Man," "the Rival Candidates," "Braganza," (the firſt production of Captain Jephſon,) and the farce of "Bon Ton," ſaid to have been written by Mr. Garrick, Mr. Colman, General Burgoyne, and Mr. King.

In the ſeaſon of 1774-5, Mr. Sheridan's comedy of "The Rivals," came out at Covent Garden, where Mr. Macklin made his re-appearance in Shylock, and Sir Archy M'Sarcaſm.—Mr. Woodward brought out a pantomimic maſque, called "The Druids. "The Romance

of

of an Hour," "The Two Miſers," "Cleonice," and "St. Patrick's Day," were the other new pieces of the ſeaſon.

Mr. Colman this year quitted the management of Covent Garden.

In 1775 Mr. Foote was firſt honoured with the preſence of their Majeſties at the Haymarket; the piece commanded was "The Devil on Two Sticks."

A Mr. Jackſon performed the character of Eldred, in a tragedy of that name, written by himſelf, which was well received.

Mr. Garrick wrote a petite piece for the opening of Drury Lane this year, 1775-6, called "The Theatrical Candidates:" Another production of his was alſo brought forward, called "May-Day; or, the Little Gypſey," in which the elder Miſs Abrams made her firſt appearance with great ſucceſs. An oppoſition, tantamount to a riot, was occaſioned this ſeaſon by the performance of a new piece called "The Blackamoor Waſhed White."—Two pieces of Ben Jonſon's were altered and revived." "The Sultan," "The Runaway," and "The Spleen; or, Iſlington Spa," were produced, and

Towards the cloſe of the ſeaſon Mr. Garrick ſold his entire theatrical concerns to Dr. Ford, Meſſrs. Ewart, Sheridan, and Linley, for the ſum of thirty-five thouſand pounds.—On the 10th of June, 1776, he took leave of the town, having performed, as his laſt appearance, Don Felix, in "The Wonder." As the Houſe might be expected to be crouded in all parts, the profits

of the night were generouſly given to the Drury Lane fund for decayed actors. The parting of Roſcius with the town was truly affecting, and the following is the account given in the chronicles of the day of a circumſtance which forms an intereſting and important æra in the annals of the Engliſh Stage:—

"The play being ended, the awful criſis ap-
"proached when the town was to ſee their fa-
"vourite Roſcius no more; the ſcene of his
"taking leave was beyond deſcription diſtreſſing.
"Let the reader conceive this univerſal favourite,
"impreſſed with all the feelings his peculiar
"ſituation muſt call forth, advancing to bid
"farewel to that public which had conferred on
"him ſo many obligations.—After a ſhort pauſe,
"which was neceſſary to enable him to recollect
"himſelf, under his viſible agitation of ſpirits,
"he addreſſed the audience thus:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"It has been cuſtomary with perſons under
"my circumſtances to addreſs you in a farewel
"epilogue: I had the ſame intention, and
"turned my thoughts that way, but found my-
"ſelf then as incapable of writing ſuch an Epi-
"logue as I ſhould be now of ſpeaking it,—the
"jingle of rhyme and the language of fiction
"would but ill ſuit my preſent feelings. This
"is to me a very awful moment; it is no leſs
"than parting for ever with thoſe from whom I
"have received the greateſt kindneſs and favours,
"and upon that ſpot where that kindneſs and

thoſe

" thoſe favours were enjoyed, [*Here for a mo-*
" *ment he was unable to proceed, until relieved by*
" *a flood of tears.*] Whatever may be the
" changes of my future life, the deep impreſ-
" ſion I have of your kindneſs will always re-
" main HERE [*putting his hand to his breaſt,*]
" fixed and unalterable :—I will very readily
" agree to my ſucceſſors having more ſkill and
" ability for their ſtations than I have ; but I
" defy them all to take more ſincere and more
" uninterrupted pains for your favour, or to be
" more truly ſenſible of it than is your moſt obe-
" dient and grateful humble ſervant.

" Here he retired amidſt the blended tears and
" acclamations of the moſt brilliant audience
" that ever was aſſembled."

Thus, loaded with wealth and honours, did Roſcius finiſh a ſplendid purſuit of profeſſional duties, which had laſted upwards of thirty years, during which, from his ſituation, he had gained many friends, and made many enemies ; the former as laviſhly profuſe of his praiſe as the latter were niggardly ſparing of it ; though envy itſelf muſt confeſs there never was an actor who, in ſuch a variety of characters, (ſome of them ſo very oppoſite in their complexion,) arrived ſo near the ſtandard of perfection, or exhibited ſo true a picture of genuine nature. As a Manager, he was frequently accuſed, and, perhaps, not without reaſon, of exerciſing little arts, which his influence over the theatre furniſhed him with, to cruſh riſing merit when approaching to a degree of competition with himſelf. As a Drama-

tic Author he was reſpectable, though his forte principally lay in a happy mode of hitting off a ſpecies of Prologue and Epilogue peculiar to himſelf.

There are no leſs than thirty-ſeven pieces, moſt of them on the Stock liſt, which he either originally wrote, tranſlated, or judiciouſly altered and adapted to the taſte of modern times;—for aſſiſtance of the latter kind even Shakeſpeare himſelf ſtands indebted to him.

Covent Garden was this year deprived of the aſſiſtance of Mr. Shuter, on whoſe illneſs Mr. Weſton, from the Haymarket, ſupplied his place, but not for a long time, for Mr. Weſton himſelf died on the 16th of January, 1776, and his death is ſaid to have been accelerated by frequent intoxication. This Gentleman was ſon to Thomas Weſton, Eſq. (firſt cook to his Majeſty,) who procured ſeveral reſpectable ſituations for his ſon: but Mr. Weſton, jun. was too partial to the ſtage to attend to any other employ; and after having played ſome time in the country, he got recommended to Mr. Foote, and being engaged at the Haymarket, ſoon eſtabliſhed a reputation by his performance of Jerry Sneak. He married a Milliner, who afterwards came on the ſtage, and proved a tolerable actreſs. When Roſcius went to Italy, Mr. Weſton played Abel Drugger, at Drury Lane, with uncommon applauſe, and in the part of Scrub is ſaid to have excelled Garrick himſelf. Mr. Weſton, from a conſtant habit of being in pecuniary embarraſſments, was at all times ſo much in fear of Bailiffs, that he would frequently take to his heels whenever he

met

met a perſon of a forbidding countenance.—— Mr. Sheridan's opera of "The Duenna" was this ſeaſon brought out at Covent Garden, and proved, in point of ſucceſs, a ſecond "Beggar's Opera." Tate Wilkinſon, Eſq. Manager of the York Theatre, not being able to procure a regular copy of this piece, after having ſeen it once or twice, bought the ſongs, and collected a few hints from the diurnal publications, actually wrote the dialogue, &c. from obſervations and memory; and his "Duenna" meeting with wonderful ſucceſs, has been performed ever ſince in his circuit of York, Hull, Leeds, &c.— The other novel productions at Covent Garden were, "The Country Fair," written for the opening of the Houſe, "The Syrens," "Three Weeks after Marriage," the pantomime of "Promethius," beſides ſeveral pieces, which were afterwards, for want of ſucceſs, laid aſide.

The Haymarket in 1776 was again honoured with the preſence of their Majeſties. A Miſs Eſſex made her appearance in a new piece called "The Contract," written by Dr. Franklin.— Mr. Foote produced a comedy called the "Capuchin," and Mr. Dibdin a muſical piece called "The Metamorphoſes," in which a young Gentleman made his firſt appearance.

In the ſeaſon of 1776-7, a public altercation took place between the managers of Drury Lane and Mrs. Yates, who, not having time given her to provide a dreſs for Lady Townly, refuſed to play the part, which was, in conſequence, performed by Miſs Young, afterwards Mrs. Pope: upon

upon Mrs. Yates's firſt appearance after the diſpute, ſhe, after a ſhort addreſs to the audience, was received with their warmeſt approbation, and acquitted from any inattention or diſreſpect to them.

Mr. Reddiſh, this ſeaſon, had to apologize to the audience for having appeared before them intoxicated with liquor.

The houſe opened with "New Brooms Sweep Clean;"—the principal ſucceſsful productions were "Selima and Azor," "The Trip to Scarborough," "All the World's a Stage," and Mr. Sheridan's incomparable comedy of "The School for Scandal."

Covent Garden, this ſeaſon, had to lament the loſs of ſeveral of its moſt reſpectable ſupports.

In April the celebrated Woodward died.—As an Actor he, in many reſpects, had no ſuperior. He was one of the firſt Harlequins and contrivers of Pantomime we ever had, which may be accounted for by his long pupilage to Mr. Rich.—He was for ten years particularly intimate with Mrs. Bellamy. Mr. Garrick ever held him in the moſt cordial eſteem, and, among a number of other reputable characters, bequeathed a ring to his memory.

Mr. Shuter died November 1, 1776, and, at that time, left no one to fill his line of acting with any chance of equalling his merit and genuine humour, upon which he always depended for the ſucceſs of his acting, without the common degrading auxiliaries of grimace, buffoonery, and

introductory

introductory nonſenſe ſo prevalent in our preſent theatricals.

Mr. Barry died on the 10th of January, 1777. He was ever, and with great reaſon, a particular favourite here and in Dublin, where, with Mr. Woodward, he had been joint-manager for ſeveral ſeaſons. Mr. Barry's line was tragedy and genteel comedy; in many parts he was thought equal to Garrick, and in Romeo and Othello allowed to be ſuperior; and it was ever the opinion of the fair ſex that his elegant figure, action, and expreſſive countenance, rendered him the moſt agreeable actor of a love-ſcene they ever ſaw.

He was buried in the Cloiſters of Weſtminſter Abbey, on Monday, the 20th of January.

Having mentioned the loſſes of Covent Garden, we now come to its acquiſitions, which were few, and conſiſted chiefly of "News from Parnaſſus," a muſical piece called "The Seraglio," compoſed jointly by Dr. Arne and Mr. Dibdin, and ſaid to be written by twelve different perſons, in as many different counties;—it was not, however, remarkably ſucceſsful. The other pieces were "Caractacus," "Sir Thomas Overbury," and "Know Your Own Mind."

Mr. Foote this ſeaſon ſold his Patent of the Haymarket Theatre to Mr. Colman, for which, with the wardrobe, and all Mr. Foote's unpubliſhed pieces, the latter gentleman was to receive 1600l. per annum, during life, and occaſionally appear on the ſtage, which latter part of the agreement was left unfulfilled.

The death of our modern Ariſtophanes, wa occaſioned

occaſioned by an attack of the palſey, he was ordered to the ſouth of France, but died at Dover, on his way to the continent, October 10, 1777.

Mr. Foote was born at Truro, in Cornwall, educated at Worceſter College, Oxford, and placed as a Law Student in the Temple.—He ſoon quitted the temple for the ſtage; and thus, as far as our limits permit, we have detailed the principal circumſtances of his progreſs.

His dramatic productions are upwards of twenty, and poſſeſs an infinitude of genuine wit and humour;—their locality and the perſonal ſatire they poſſeſs is, however, the cauſe why they ſo ſeldom are acted, and why many of them may, perhaps, be forgot, when inferior productions are remembered.

Mr. Colman opened the Haymarket Theatre on the 15th of May, 1777, and to give it all poſſible attraction engaged Meſſrs. Moody, Parſons, Dodd, Banniſter, Baddely, Mrs. Wrighten, Mrs. Baddely, Mrs. Davis, &c. a prologue, written by the Manager, and ſpoken by Mr. Palmer, commenced the campaign; the comedy of "The Engliſh Merchant," and the farce of "Lilliput" followed, the latter altered by Mr. Garrick, (its author,) and a Proceſſion of Cards introduced in it, Gulliver walking as the Knave of Clubs;—this piece of burleſque was well received. A new motto was preſixed to this Theatre. "*Stet Fortuna Domus.*"

Mr. Colman's firſt ſeaſon will cut a conſpicuous figure in the Hiſtory of the Drama, from the introduction of three performers whoſe abilities

ties will furniſh converſation for years of futurity, Mr. Edwin, Mr. Henderſon, and Miſs Farren. Mr. Edwin firſt became a favourite in the character of Midas. His wonderful powers of comicality, which eſtabliſhed him ſo firmly as an actor, are too freſh in the memory of all our readers to want a detail here. Mr. Henderſon had made ſeveral attempts, prior to this ſeaſon, to get engaged in London; but though a wonderful favourite at Bath, he could not prevail on Mr. Garrick to give him a trial; and we are informed that the Managers of both the Winter Theatres had repeatedly obſerved, that "though Mr. Henderſon might be popular at Bath, he would not do upon London Boards;" as if ſome peculiar power had been poſſeſſed by a metropolitan theatre to deſtroy the faculties of a young actor:—what would thoſe Managers ſay could they now behold our ſtupenduous theatrical ſtructures? to which the playhouſes of their days bore as little proportion as they conceived to be between the Bath theatre and their own territories. It may not be amiſs to obſerve here that the ſcale of provincial Theatricals has extended with equal, if not ſuperior, rapidity, for there is now ſcarce a market town of any conſequence which has not a neat (and frequently very elegant,) theatre of its own, as well ſupplied with ſcenery, &c. in miniature, as thoſe at London; and the theatres at Liverpool, Mancheſter, Bath, Briſtol, York, Hull, Norwich, Birmingham, &c. &c. &c. are in many reſpects infinitely ſuperior to what the London theatres were a few years back.

Mr.

Mr. Henderſon, however, not only proved the Managers miſtaken in their opinion of their boards, but found, what was ever the caſe, that a London audience are the firſt in the world to diſcern and reward merit; for though they did not paſs judgment 'till he had played a number of characters, yet after performing Falſtaff, Hamlet, Leon, &c. he was pronounced an ornament to the ſtage, and never gave the public room to recal that determination.

Every night of her performance ſpeaks her praiſes too well for us to attempt the eulogium of Miſs Farren. She came out in Miſs Hardcaſtle; her ſenſibility, action, and delivery, ſoon raiſed her to the utmoſt height of reputation;—it is ſince making the above obſervations that this Lady is become Counteſs of Derby, a proof that virtue joined to talent, is in this country held equal in conſideration to any rank or condition.

Gay's Opera of "Polly; or, A ſequel to the Beggar's Opera," which had been written many years, but withheld from the public for want of a licence, was this ſeaſon brought forward: it was much altered by Mr. Colman, and well caſt, but did not ſucceed, owing to the remote points of temporary ſatire, which, of courſe, were not underſtood.

Mrs. Gardner produced, for her own benefit, a comedy, called "The Advertiſement;" and Mr. Colman wrote a comedy, with ſongs, particularly ſucceſsful, called "The Spaniſh Barber."

About the time of opening Drury Lane in 1777-8, there was much talk of a parting between

tween Mr. Lacey and the other proprietors;—the difference, however, if there was any, finiſhed amicably. Mr. Henderſon was engaged in conſequence of his ſucceſs at the Haymarket. The pieces produced were "The Quaker," by Dibdin, "Roman Sacrifice," by Shirby, "Battle of Haſtings," by Cumberland, "Belphegor," &c. &c. The "Beggar's Opera" was performed at both houſes, "in the form of a Moral Tale, "though the indecent ſcenes remained,"—and, for the ſake of poetical juſtice, Macheath was (by advice of Mr. Garrick, who frequently aſſiſted the theatre with his opinion,) ſentenced to heave ballaſt three years on the river Thames;—the expected effect did not, however, take place; ſuch alterations were, of courſe, thought ridiculous, and the piece gradually returned to its priſtine formation.

No events of conſequence occurred at Covent Garden, where the novelties of the ſeaſon were "Love Finds the Way," "Percy," "Alfred," "Poor Vulcan," &c.

The firſt production of the celebrated John O'Keefe, came out at the Hay-Market, in the ſeaſon of 1778, and was a farce in two acts, called, "Tony Lumpkin in Town, or the Diletante," its reception induced the author, before unknown, to avow himſelf, and the town has ſince been highly indebted to the eccentric efforts of his pen.

Mr. Banniſter, jun. made his firſt appearance in Dick, in "The Apprentice," his ſucceſs led him to Drury-Lane, where, under the tutorage of Garrick, he made rapid ſtrides in public favour, of which he has ever ſince kept faſt poſſeſſion.

The Theatre was much altered and improved; the new pieces were, "The Female Chevalier," "Nature will Prevail" "Buxom Joan," "The Suicide," (the firſt of our comedies written in four acts,) "Bonduca," (altered by Mr. Colman from Beaumont and Fletcher,) "The Gypſies," and "The Flitch of Bacon."

During the ſeaſon of 1778-9, at Drury-Lane, Mr. Sheridan produced a farce called, "The Camp," and a comedy written by the late Henry Fielding, Eſq. (called "the Fathers, or the Good-natured Man,") was brought out for the benefit of his family. "The Law of Lombardy," "The Double Deception," "Who's the Dupe," and a pantomine, called the "Wonders of Derby-ſhire, or Harlequin in the Peake," were, with ſome leſs ſucceſsful productions, likewiſe acted for the firſt time.

On January 20th. 1779, died David Garrick, Eſq. whoſe character and abilities we have already ſpoken of.—He was buried with ſplendor and almoſt regal reſpect in Weſtminſter Abbey.—A Monody, written by R. B. Sheridan, Eſq. was recited at Drury-lane, in memory of Roſcius; the ſtage, on that occaſion, was formed as at Oratorios, and a monument of Garrick erected before the organ. Mrs. Yates exerted all her wonderful abilities in reciting the Monody, which was divided into three parts, and relieved by appropriate airs, ſung by Mr. Webſter, Mr. Gaudry, a young Lady, and Mrs. Wrighten, with a ſuitable band of choriſters.

George Garrick, Eſq. brother to Mr. Garrick, died

died within a month after him. —Mr. G. had bequeathed him 10,000l.

At Covent-Garden this year, Mr. Hull was appointed deputy Manager, inſtead of Mr. Colman, who entirely relinquiſhed all other concerns on account of the management of his own Theatre, —Mr. Dibdin produced four muſical pieces, viz. "Roſe and Colin," "Annette and Lubin," "The Wives Revenged," and "The Chelſea Penſioner."—Mr. Pilon was equally prolific, and brought out four pieces, viz. "The Invaſion, or a Trip to Brighthelmſtone," "The Touchſtone, or Harlequin Traveller," "The Liverpool Prize," and "The Illumination." Other pieces, were, "The Lady of the Manor." (altered from Jonſon, Beaumont, and Fletcher,) "Buthred," "Fatal Falſehood," (by Miſs H. More,) "Gallic Gratitude," and a maſque of Mr. Cumberland's called "Calypſo."

A literary conteſt took place during the Hay-Market ſeaſon of 1778, betwen Mrs. Cowley and Miſs Hannah More, on account of a tragedy called "Albina," produced by Mrs. C. and which was ſaid to have been borrowed in ſome inſtances from Miſs More's play of "Fatal Falſehood," in anſwer to this, and a ſimilar accuſation of having committed a Plaigary on "The Law of Lombardy," Mrs. Cowley made it evident that her play, though juſt produced, had been written three years prior to either of the above; circumſtances of imperfection in its repreſentation alſo contributed to hurt the effect this tragedy might otherwiſe have had. The

Theatre did not open till the 31ſt of May, a very late commencement at that time, and owing to the encroachments of the Winter Theatres who yearly advance ſo much upon the Hay-Market ſeaſon, that, in a few years, we may expect no Summer Theatricals, weſt of Covent-Garden, or the old new Drury.—The pieces produced, beſides Mrs. Cowley's tragedy, were, "Summer Amuſement," "Widow and no Widow," "The Son-in-law," and "Separate Maintenance."

The Margravine of Anſpach, *then* Lady Craven, brought forward a comedy in three acts, at Drury-lane, in the ſeaſon of 1779, called "The Miniature Picture," but though it had met much approbation when performed at her Ladyſhip's private Theatre, it made little or no impreſſion on the public.—Mr. Sheridan's favourite farce of "The Critic," a comedy called "The Times," "Zoraida," a tragedy, and a piece by Mrs. Cowley, called "The School for Eloquence," were, with ſeveral others, performed this year.

Nothing worthy of record paſſed at Covent-Garden, a number of pieces came out, the moſt ſucceſsful were, "The Bondman," (altered from Maſſinger, by Cumberland,) "The Deaf Lover," and "The Siege of Gibraltar," both by Pilon, and "The Belle's Stratagem," by Mrs. Cowley.

As the records of the Theatres are very barren till the year 1782, we ſhall paſs on to that period, giving only a liſt of the intermediate Dramatic productions, moſt entitled to notice.

DRURY-LANE, 1780-1,

"The Generous Impoſtor," "Lord of the Manor,"

Manor," "Royal Suppliants," "Diſſipation," "Robinſon Cruſoe."

1781-2

"The Divorce," "Fair Circaſſian," "Carnival of Venice," "Lun's Ghoſt," "The Fair American."

COVENT-GARDEN, 1780-1.

"Tom Thumb," "Cloſe of the Poll," "Iſlanders," "Harlequin Freemaſon," "Siege of Sinope," "Barnaby Brittle," "Who'd have Thought It," "The Man of the World."

1781-2.

"The Marriage Act," "Duplicity," "Count of Narbonne," "Choice of Harlequin," "Which is the Man?" "Poſitive Man," "Retaliation."

HAY-MARKET, 1780.

"The Manager in Diſtreſs," "Fire and Water," "Chapter of Accidents," "Wedding Night," "Genius of Nonſence."

1781.

"Dead Alive," "The Agreeable Surpriſe," with ſeveral others not equally ſucceſsful.

1782.

"None are ſo Blind as thoſe that wont See," "The Eaſt Indian," "The Candidate," "Harlequin Teague, or the Giants Cauſeway."

The ſeaſon of 1782-3, at Drury-Lane was

remarkable for the introduction of Mrs. Siddons; this lady came out October 12th. in "Iſabella," the reception ſhe experienced, the *rage* ſhe created through the metropolis to ſee her, and the powerful attraction ſhe at preſent poſſeſſes, are circumſtances of common notoriety.—Mrs. Siddons had performed ſome time in Bath, Liverpool, Edinburgh, &c. the inhabitants of all which places paid juſt tribute to her merit; yet Mr. Garrick, as we before obſerved, could not, or would not, diſcover any part of thoſe abilities ſhe moſt eminently poſſeſſes; her performance of Iſabella on her firſt appearance, fixed ſo great an impreſſion on the public, that none of her characters to this day poſſeſs more forcible magnetiſm. Mr. Barrymore made his entré this ſeaſon in the character of Young Meadows, in "Love in a Village," in which piece Mr. Chapman, on the ſame evening, made his firſt appearance. Mr. Barrymore has ſince quitted the line of Opera characters for thoſe of tragedy, and genteel comedy, in each of which he is a very reſpectable acquiſition to the theatre.

The numerous public avocations of Mr. Sheridan, interfering too much with the buſineſs of the theatre, Mr. Thomas King was this ſeaſon appointed deputy Manager, and on the 17th of September, he delivered an addreſs to the audience on the occaſion, which was greatly received, and himſelf experienced the warmeſt congratulations of the public, his addreſs was called a "ſerio-comic-dramatic Olio," and began with the following parody:

"Moſt potent, grave, and reverend Critics,

"My

" My very noble and approved good-maſters;
" That I have taken the conduct of this *old* Houſe,
" True—True I *am* Manager, &c.

The word *old* was introduced in oppoſition to the Covent-Garden Theatre, which was now ſtiled the *new* houſe, in conſequence of alterations made during the ſummer; Drury-Lane was alſo much improved and embelliſhed.—The ſucceſsful pieces were, " Too Civil by Half," " The Triumph of Mirth," " The Adventures of a Night," and " Imitation, or Female Fortune Hunters," by Mr. Waldron, who has ſince called it " Heigho for a Huſband."

Covent-Garden Theatre was conſiderably altered and amended, both as to elegance and convenience; the roof was raiſed, the gallerics enlarged, the ſeats in pit and gallery much improved, the boxes elevated and brought forward to the ſtage doors, the ornaments, paintings, &c. were in the firſt ſtyle. The ſucceſsful literary novelties were, " An Occaſional Prelude," " The Caſtle of Andaluſia," Lord Mayor's Day," " Roſina," " The Capricious Lady," " Myſterious Huſband," &c.

The pieces produced at the Hay-Market in 1783, were, " A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed." " The Young Quaker," " The Birth Day, or the Prince of Arragon," " The Receipt Tax," " Seeing is Believing," " The Lawyer," and " Gretna Green."

At Drury-Lane in 1783-4, Mr. John Kemble made his firſt appearance before a London audience, he came laſt from Dublin, and made his debut in the

the character of Hamlet, a part he ſeems to have made his peculiar ſtudy, and has certainly brought beauties of the author to light in it, that even Garrick was unacquainted with; he met the reception his merits demanded, and has from that time proved an acquiſition of the firſt conſequence to Drury-Lane.—As an actor, he ſtands unexcelled in point of claſſical judgement, and to the ſtudy of nature he unites the ſcholar and the gentleman. As an author, he has been tolerably ſucceſsful, but his literary forte lies in reviving and adapting the works of ancient dramatiſts to the taſte of modern times; a talent which was alſo poſſeſſed by Garrick.—In this way Mr. Kemble has brought forward many valuable old plays, which, in conſequence of a few exceptionable paſſages, had become obſolete, and, but for his judicious alterations, would have been entirely loſt to the Engliſh ſtage.—And if, as before obſerved, the Dramas of Shakeſpeare himſelf received benefit from the pen of Garrick, they are alſo conſiderably indebted to the labour of Mr. Kemble.

Mr. King, in conſequence of ſome miſunderſtanding with Mr. Sheridan, gave up the management of Drury-Lane, which he had entered on only the year before, and engaged for a certain number of nights at Covent-Garden.—Mr. Linley ſucceeded in the direction of Drury-Lane, and Mr. Lee Lewes was engaged in the ſituation of a performer, left vacant by Mr. King.—Pieces produced were, "Metamorphoſis," "Harlequin Junior," "Reparation," and "The Double Diſguiſe."

Mr.

Mr. Johnſtone, from the Dublin Theatre, made his entré this year on the boards of Covent-Garden in the character of Lionel; his wife made her appearance the ſame ſeaſon, with ſucceſs, in the character of Roſetta; the maiden name of this Lady was Poitier, ſhe is now deceaſed, and Mr. Johnſtone married again.

Mr. Johnſtone exhibited much ability as a ſinger, and was ſoon a great favourite, but he has ſince given his attention almoſt entirely to comedy, in which his Iriſh characters are always excellently ſuſtained, and for giving effect to an Iriſh comic ſong, he ſtands unrivalled.—Some judicious improvements were made in the box entrances of this theatre.—The ſucceſsful dramatic productions were, "The Poor Soldier," (by O'Keefe) improved from that gentleman's farce called "The Shamrock," "The Magic Picture," "More Ways than One," "Robin Hood," &c. the pantomimes of "Friar Bacon," "Harlequin Rambler," and a grand ballet called, "The Rival Knights," in which Monſ. Bithmere, Duranci, Boimaiſon, &c. were uncommonly clever in their ſtyle of theatrical combat, it was alſo their firſt appearance in England.

Nothing material took place at the Hay-Market theatre in the ſeaſon of 1784, but the introduction of the following pieces, "The Election of the Managers," by Mr. Colman, ſen. "Two to One," by Mr. Colman, jun. being his firſt dramatic eſſay, and the reception of it was a prophetic earneſt of his ſubſequent ſucceſſes, Mr. C. jun. had juſt then attained his 21ſt year;

"A

"A Mogul Tale," by Mrs. Inchbald, was ſo well received as to attract the notice of managers, who had before neglected this lady, whoſe pen has ſince furniſhed ſo much amuſement to the town, "Lord Ruſſell," "The Two Connoiſſeurs," and "Peeping Tom."

Mrs. Bellamy, (whom we have frequently mentioned, and who has given the particulars of her life at ſome length in her celebrated "Apology, &c.") took leave of the town the ſeaſon of 1784-5 at Drury-Lane Theatre, where the Managers kindly gave her a benefit play, Mrs. Yates, on this occaſion, played the Dutcheſs of Braganza, and a farewel addreſs was advertiſed to be ſpoken by Mrs. Bellamy, but her powers entirely yielding to her feelings when before the audience, who were numerous and liberal, Miſs Farren generouſly aſſiſted her by ſpeaking the addreſs, Mrs. B. mean time, continued on the ſtage, and by her tears teſtified her gratitude and aſſent to the pathetic expreſſions of the addreſs which was written by Mr. Stuart, and of which the following lines may ſerve as a ſpecimen;

"Once a faint ſtar in the theatric ſky,
"When Cibber with her Garrick blazed on high;
"Cooing like turtles, billing like the dove;
"Barry and I bore off the palm in love!
"Like Cleopatra, then the world I trod,
"For *here* reign'd love's luxurious little god;
[*Preſſing her hand to her breaſt.*
"But vain thoſe taunts and egotiſms paſt,
"*To this complexion I am come at laſt.*

The

The extremes of fortune experienced by this lady (who is ſince dead) are, as before obſerved, minutely pourtrayed by herſelf.—Her attractions, beauty, and abilities, when *young*, contraſted with the follies from which reſulted the diſtreſſed poverty of her *age*, preſents a leſſon worthy the attention of every one, and we ſincerely join in the wiſh expreſſed in another part of her addreſs, as follows:

" O, if my artleſs, ſerio-comic pen,
" Save but one female from the ſnares of men,
" My checquered life not ſadly I'll deplore,
" In hopes my woes may reſcue many more.

An illiberal oppoſition greeted the entré of Mrs. Siddons this ſeaſon, in the part of Mrs. Beverley; the ſuppoſed cauſe was, that, when in Dublin ſhe had refuſed, after agreeing, to play for Meſſrs. Digges and Bretreon's benefits; a ſubſequent inveſtigation, however, defeated the effect of this malicious attempt; it being proved, that during a fortnight, in the courſe of which thoſe benefits took place, Mrs. Siddons was confined to her bed by a very ſerious indiſpoſition.

Mr. King returned to Drury Lane, and was again placed on the dramatic throne. Mr. Hayley's tragedy of "Lord Ruſſel," which came out during the ſummer at the Hay-market, was performed on the night of opening this theatre: as were in the courſe of the ſeaſon "The Spaniſh Rivals," by Mr. Lonſdale, "The Carmelite," and "The Natural Son," both by Mr. Cumberland, "The Maid of Honour," an alteration from

from Maſſinger by Mr. Kemble, "Liberty Hall," by Mr. Dibdin, "Elfrida," by Mr. Maſon, "The Fool," by Captain Topham, and "The Humouriſt," by Mr. Cobb.

The Covent Garden company was graced by the addition of Mr. Holman and Mr. Pope, who made their firſt appearances in the characters of Romeo and Oroonoko; it is difficult to ſay which was beſt received.—Mr. Holman diſplayed a wonderful degree of Nature, feeling, and diſcrimination in Romeo, which part (as we obſerved of Kemble's Hamlet,) appears to have engaged his moſt particular attention.

The acting of Mr. Pope in Oronooko was a fair preſumption of his future ſucceſs:—the manly, yet muſical tones of this gentleman's voice, ſo judiciouſly varied in the extremes of rage and tenderneſs, aſſiſted by a pleaſing figure and great propriety of action, combine, with other acquiſitions, to make him eſteemed as a firſt rate performer.

Mr. O'Keeſe produced two pieces this ſeaſon, viz. "Fontainbleau," and "The Blackſmith of Antwerp"—the latter by no means ſo ſucceſsful as the former. Mr. Pilon alſo produced two pieces, viz. "Barataria," and "Æroſtation," the latter, as in the above inſtance, not ſucceſsful, the former a favourite: the other pieces were "The Follies of a Day," by Holcroft, "Faſhionable Levities," by Macnally, "The Nunnery," by Pearce, "The Campaign," afterwards altered to "Love and War," by Captain Jephſon,

ſon, the pantomime of "the Magic Cavern," &c.

Meſſrs. O'Keefe and Pilon mounted Pegaſus for the Haymarket in the ſummer 1785; the former produced "The Beggar on Horſeback," and the latter an alteration of Shakeſpeare's "All's Well that Ends Well." Mr. Colman, jun. brought out "Turk and No Turk," and Mrs. Inchbald the comedy of "I'll Tell You What:" Theſe novelties, with the performance of a ſpeaking pantomime, called "Here and There and Every Where," conſtitute the events of the ſeaſon.

Drury Lane in 1785-6 made an acquiſition, which has added a grand ſource of attraction to its entertainments, in the perſon of Mrs. Jordan, who appeared for the firſt time on the 18th of October, 1785, in the part of Peggy in the "Country Girl." It is a curious circumſtance that this lady, who was recommended to the theatre by Mr. Smith, was engaged to play ſecond parts in tragedy to Mrs. Siddons, but finding very little reaſon to hope ſhe would ever be *more* than a *ſecond*, if ſhe played in the ſame line with Mrs. S. ſhe very fortunately and judiciouſly made her entrè in comedy;— Peggy, in "The Country Girl," was her firſt attempt, in which her merit and natural ſtyle of acting, intermingled with a playfulneſs and *je ne ſcai quoi* ſo perfectly her own, ſtruck the audience with ſo much agreeable ſurpriſe, and called ſo loudly on their approbation, that by the time ſhe had performed the Romp, Sir Harry Wildair, &c. ſhe was pronounced equal, though in a different ſtyle, to

Mrs. Siddons herſelf; and theſe Ladies have jointly ſupported their reſpective caſts with ſo high an eſtimation from the public, that they may be juſtly ſtiled the Tragic and Comic Muſes of that theatre, which their abilities have, in ſome inſtances, ſo conſpicuouſly upheld.

Mrs. Siddons this ſeaſon performed Belvidera, for the benefit of Mr. Henderſon's Widow, and ſpoke a prologue, written for the occaſion by Mr. Murphy. The pieces brought out were "The Strangers at Home," "The Heireſs," "The Projects," "The Captives," and a pantomime called "Hurly Burly; or, the Fairy of the Well."

Mr. Henderſon's death was an irreparable loſs to Covent Garden this ſeaſon. That Gentleman was, in many of Shakeſpeare's plays, a ſecond Garrick, and, like thoſe of Roſcius, Mr. Henderſon's talents were by no means confined;—he played Falſtaff or Hamlet (and many ſimilar extremes) with the moſt refined attention and propriety; and though his figure was againſt him, and his voice thick, yet his merit ſoon obſcured theſe diſadvantages, and procured him the reputation of being a ſterling actor. He died November 25, 1785, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey. He died inteſtate, though his property amounted to near ſeven thouſand pounds.

Covent Garden, however, received a valuable addition to its operative attractions by the engagement of Mrs. Billington, who came out in the character of Roſetta, in "Love in a Village."—Her muſical ſcience and vocal powers

gained

gained her immediately the ſanction of that audience whoſe approbation ſhe encreaſed on every ſubſequent performance. Mrs. Brown alſo made her debut as Miſs Prue, in "Love for Love," in which character ſhe gained conſiderable reputation. The ſeaſon was further remarkable for Mrs. Abington's performance of *Scrub* for her own benefit, and for the damnation of a piece called "Small Talk; or, the Weſtminſter Boy," brought out for the benefit of Mrs. Wells;—the young gentlemen of Weſtminſter, not chuſing to be reflected from the theatrical mirror, made a ſtrong party, and though the firſt act was got through with ſome difficulty, the ſecond was not permitted to finiſh at all.

The pieces that met with better ſucceſs were "Appearance is Againſt Them," "The Choleric Fathers," "Love in a Camp," "Werter," "Omai," "The Peruvian," &c.

The only occurrences worth notice at the Haymarket in 1786, were Mrs. Webb's performance of Falſtaff for her own benefit, (in which ſhe was not only allowed to be *great*, but it produced her a *great* houſe,) and the introduction of "The Widow's Vow," "The Diſbanded Officer," "The Devil's in the Wine Cellar," (altered from Aaron Hill,) "The Siege of Curzola," and "Tit for Tat."

In the ſeaſon of 1786 Mr. Kelly made his entré at Drury Lane, in the character of Lionel, in the "School for Fathers."—The Science poſſeſſed by this gentleman, acquired by much ſtudy and travel, ſecured his reception with the public,

who, to this day, acknowledge in loud plaudits the pleaſure he inſpires. The ſucceſsful new pieces at Drury Lane were, "Richard Cœur de Lion," "The Firſt Floor," "Seduction," "Julia," and "The Box Lobby Loungers."

Mr. Ryder came out at Covent Garden this ſeaſon in Sir John Brute, in which character he was perfectly original, and, during his ſtay in London, was a firſt rate favourite. Covent Garden produced a piece, called "Richard Cœur de Lion," in oppoſition to that at Drury Lane, to which, however, its ſucceſs was by no means comparable. Mrs. Inchbald brought out a piece tranſlated from the French, called "The Midnight Hour," which ſucceeded; and Lady Wallace publiſhed, in oppoſition to it, a comedy, called "Diamond Cut Diamond," which was alſo a tranſlation from the ſame piece with the Midnight Hour, but infinitely inferior to Mrs. Inchbald's, which had not been merely tranſlated, but in every ſcene altered and adapted to the taſte of an Engliſh audience. The other productions of conſequence at Covent Garden were "He Wou'd be a Soldier," "Eloiſa," "Such Things Are," "Love and War," "Nina," "Bonds Without Judgment," and a Harlequinade, called "The Enchanted Caſtle."

Mr. Colman, having failed in a ſpirited attempt to open his Theatre rather earlier than the unreaſonably prolonged ſeaſons of the Winter Theatres would permit him, was obliged to go on in the track his formidable oppoſers marked out for him, and the following pieces came out

at the Haymarket in the ſeaſon of 1787: "Harveſt Home," "Inkle and Yarico," "Vimonda," and "The Village Lawyer."

On the 20th of June, 1787, Mr. J. Palmer opened a new Playhouſe, called the ROYALTY THEATRE, near Wellcloſe-ſquare, which had been built by ſubſcription, on a ſpacious and elegant ſcale, under the idea that the Juſtices of the Tower Hamlets were empowered, by the Royalty of that fortreſs, to licence the performance of plays:—it proved, however, totally different; for, after the night of opening, when "As You Like It," and "Miſs in her Teens," were performed for the benefit of a public charity, the theatre immediately cloſed, and the entertainments afterwards exhibited were burlettas, dances, and pantomimes, in the manner of thoſe performed at Sadler's Wells, &c. The idea of a permiſſion to perform plays had been ſo far indulged by the proprietors that Meſſrs. Quick, Johnſtone, Ryder, Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Martyr, &c. &c. were actually engaged, and their abilities, joined to thoſe of Meſſrs. Palmer and Banniſter, ſen. (who *did* perform on the re-opening of the Houſe,) would certainly have been ſufficiently attractive to have rendered the theatre of material conſequence. Meſſrs. Harris, Linley, and Colman, perſiſted in their determination of oppoſing it in every ſtage; and even when it was open for muſical and pantomimical performances, an information was laid againſt Mr. Delpini for only crying out "Roaſt Beef" while acting the part of clown in a pantomime; and two Juſtices were fined

100l. each, and rendered incapable of acting in the Commiſſion of the Peace, for having diſcharged Mr. Banniſter, when informed againſt as a *vagabond*. The circumſtances relative to opening the theatre may be better explained by the following addreſs, which was read by Mr. Palmer after the play and farce were over:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I am ſorry on the firſt night that I have the "honour of ſeeing this theatre graced by ſo "ſplendid an appearance, to be obliged to trou-"ble you with the peculiar circumſtances of my "ſituation.—I had flattered myſelf that I ſhould "be able, during the ſummer months, to exert "my beſt endeavours in your ſervice.

"This theatre was built under a letter of ap-"probation from the Lord Lieutenant Gover-"nor of the Tower;—and being ſituated in a "palace and fortreſs, in a diſtrict immediately "within his juriſdiction, his conſent, added to "a licence obtained from the Magiſtrates, au-"thoriſing a place of Public Entertainment, were "deemed legal authority.

"The firſt ſtone of the building was laid on "the 26th of December, 1785; at that time "the managers of the theatres at the Weſt end "of the town made no kind of objection. In "the courſe of laſt ſummer, when I performed "at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. "Colman wrote a prologue, which I ſpoke on "my benefit night, and, among others, were "the following lines:

"For

" For me, whoſe utmoſt aim is your delight,
" Accept the humble offering of this night;
" To pleaſe, wherever placed, be ſtill my care,
" At Drury, Haymarket, or Wellcloſe-ſquare.

" As Mr. Colman knew the plan I had then " in view, it was fair to conclude that he did " not meditate an oppoſition. Mr. Harris, of " Covent Garden Theatre, gave his conſent in " writing that Mr. Quick ſhould be engaged " here. After all this, to my great aſtoniſh- " ment, when a large expence had been incurred, " and this houſe was completely ready for open- " ing, the three managers thought good to pub- " liſh in the newſpapers, extracts from different " acts of Parliament, accompanied with their " joint reſolution to put the acts in force againſt " this theatre;—they went a ſtep farther, they " ſerved me with this notice."

[Here Mr. Palmer read a copy of a notice ſent to him, ſigned by Thomas Linley, Thomas Harris, and George Colman, acquainting him that inſtructions were given to lodge informations againſt him for every appearance he ſhould make in any play, or ſcene of a play, at any unlicenced theatre, contrary to the ſtatute.]

" I have the ſatisfaction to find that thoſe three " Gentlemen are the only enemies to this under- " taking; and it will be for themſelves to con- " ſider whether they are not, at the ſame time, " oppoſing the voice of the public.

" For myſelf, I have embarked my all in this " theatre; perſuaded that, under the ſanction I " obtained, it was perfectly legal:—In the

" event

" event of it, every thing dear to my family " is involved.

" I was determined to ſtrain every nerve to " merit your favour; but when I conſider the " caſe of other performers who have been alſo " threatened with proſecutions, I own whatever " riſque I run myſelf, I feel too much to riſk " for them.

" I had promiſed a benefit play for the uſe " of the London Hoſpital; and all the perform- " ers agreed with me that one night at leaſt " ſhould be employed for ſo uſeful a purpoſe.

" We have not performed for hire, gain, or " reward; and we hope that the three managers, " with the Magiſtrates in their intereſt, will " neither deem benevolence a miſdemeanour, nor " ſend us, for an act of charity, to hard labour " in the Houſe of Correction.

" I beg pardon for treſpaſſing thus long upon " your patience: circumſtanced as things are, " and a combination being formed to oppreſs " and ruin me, it is not at preſent in my power " to give out another play.

" Under the act of Parliament that empow- " ered Magiſtrates to allow certain perform- " ances, I obtained a licence; and to whatever " purpoſe of innocent amuſement this theatre " may be converted, your future patronage will " abundantly compenſate for every difficulty I " have had to encounter.

" Tumblers and Dancing Dogs might appear " unmoleſted before you; but the other per-

" formers

" formers and myſelf ſtanding forward to ex-
" hibit a moral play is deemed a crime.

" The purpoſe, however, for which we have
" this night exerted ourſelves, may ſerve to ſhew
" that a theatre near Wellcloſe ſquare may be as
" uſeful as in Covent-Garden, Drury-Lane, or
" the Hay-Market.

" All that remains, at preſent, is to return
" you my grateful thanks for the indulgence
" with which you have honoured me this night,
" I forbear to enlarge upon that ſubject, my
" heart is too full, I ſhall be ever devoted to your
" ſervice.

" Until it is announced that this houſe ſhall
" be againe opened with a ſpecies of entertain-
" ment not ſubjecting me to danger, I humbly
" take my leave."

This Addreſs produced ſeveral newſpaper inſertions, in particular one from Mr. Quick, who ſtated, that the only writing he ever received from Mr. Harris on the ſubject, (which is ſubjoined) was ſo far from a conſent, that it tended entirely to prove the uncertain and dangerous ground in which the proprietors of the Royalty Theatre were going.—An addreſs from Mr. Harris himſelf alſo appeared in the public prints, exculpating himſelf from any charge of duplicity, and affirming that Mr. Palmer had, till the Monday before opening his Theatre, always maintained that he had ſufficient authority to perform plays, and by this affirmation many reſpectable performers had been deceived; Mr. H. concludes by offering the uſe of Covent-Garden Theatre and wardrobe for

three

three nights to thoſe, who by relying on Mr. Palmer's aſſurances, had been diſtreſſed, which offer, being conſtrued into an inſult by the performers of the Royalty, was treated in the papers with contempt.

Mr. Colman, alſo to exculpate himſelf of the charge of the lines in Mr. Palmer's addreſs, inſerted a paragraph declaring that he did it in conſequence of Mr. Palmer's ſtatement that he had ſufficient authority for his plan, and that he did not intend to open his new Theatre in the ſummer, he, of courſe, could not interfere with the intereſts of the Hay-Market Houſe, whereas Mr. P. in contradiction to his promiſe, opened in June.

The Royalty opened again, as above mentioned, on the 3d of July, with a variety of muſical, ſcenic, and pantomimic exhibitions, in the latter Mr. Palmer himſelf performed, and gained a new reputation in a line he had hitherto never attempted. Mr. Banniſter, with the warmeſt degree of friendſhip, refuſed to return to the winter Theatres, and determined to ſtick by his friend Palmer to the laſt.—The principal performers during the time the Royalty remained open afterwards, were, Mr. J. Palmer, Mr. Banniſter, Mr. Sedgwick, Mr. W. Palmer, Mr. Leoni, Mr. Lee Lewes, Maſter (now Mr.) Braham, Mr. Collins, (author of "The Bruſh,") Mr. Bates, Mr. Arrowſmith, Mr. Follet, ſen. Mr. Follet, jun. Mr. Rees, Mr. Delpini, Mr. Bithmire, Mr. Holland, &c. &c.—Miſs George, Mrs. Gibbs. Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Warrel, Mrs. Burnett, Miſs Burnett, Miſs Bithmire, &c. &c. &c. with a numerous company

company of figure dancers, pantomime performers, chorus ſingers, &c. &c.—The pieces produced at the Royalty, were the burlettas of "The Birth Day," "Thomas and Suſan," "Hero and Leander," "True Blue," and "Apollo turned Stroller," &c. the Harlequin pantomimes were, "Hobſon's Choice, or Theſpis in Diſtreſs," "Harlequin Mungo, or a peep into the Tower," "Gil Blas, or the fool of fortune," the ſerious pantomimes were, "Don Juan, or the Libertine Deſtroyed," "The Deſerter of Naples, or Royal Clemency," "The Duke of Milan," (taken from the "Tempeſt,") with a variety of ſerious and comic ballets, a mock tragedy, called, "Almirina," written by Arthur Murphy, Eſq. was alſo produced.

The intended opening of Drury-Lane Theatre on the 15th of September, 1787, was prevented by the ſeceſſion of Meſſrs. Palmer and Banniſter, who had been advertiſed, and the Houſe opened on the night following, ſeveral letters appeared in the papers proving that Mr. Palmer and Mr. Banniſter had each given timely notice of their refuſal to perform.

On the 8th of June, 1788, Mr. Smith retired from the ſtage, and took leave of the audience (after having performed Charles, in "The School for Scandal,") in the following addreſs:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"After having devoted five and thirty years "to your ſervice, I now beg leave to retire.

"You have received me with candour, in-

"dulgence

"dulgence and generoſity; you believe, I hope, "your kindneſs is not loſt upon me.

"Actors you *have* had—you *will* have with "better powers to pleaſe you; but this I muſt "be bold to ſay, none can be found more pro- "perly ambitious of your favour, more ſtudious "of getting it, more grateful when it was got.

"This is the laſt time I am to appear before "you in my public character. May I hope the "patronage and protection you have vouchſafed "me on the ſtage, will be followed by ſome ſmall "eſteem when I am off.—Ladies and Gentlemen "farewell."

The pieces produced at Drury-Lane were, "The New Peerage," "The Fate of Sparta," "Love in the Eaſt," and "The Regent."

Nothing of conſequence took place at Covent-Garden, but the production of "The Farmer," "Animal Magnetiſm," and "Marian," with a pantomime called "The Dumb Cake, or the Regions of Fancy," ſeveral other pieces, and the Pantomime of Orpheus and Euridyce were produced and condemned.

The Hay-Market ſeaſon of 1788 was only remarkable for bringing out "The Priſoner at Large," "Ways and Means," "A Quarter of an Hour before Dinner," "The Sword of Peace." &c.

At the opening of Drury-Lane in 1788-9, a long addreſs appeared in the daily papers from Mr. King, explanatory of the reaſons for leaving town, and giving up the direction of the theatre,

which

which was undertaken by Mr. John Kemble, who made ſeveral alterations in Theatric law, particularly in the making out of play-bills, in which department a variety of diſputes had been always occaſioned by the order in which each performer's name was ſet down, it being honourable to be placed at the top, and *more* honourable to be placed at bottom with an "*And*," before the name of the character, other ſituations in the bill took rank in the eye of the performer according to the order in which they followed the firſt name; to obviate theſe diſputes Mr. Kemble entirely deſtroyed all diſtinction of rank in the *bill*, by placing the characters juſt as they may happen to be printed in the books of the play, or according to the rank of ſuppoſed character, placing always the higheſt character, as a King, Governor, &c. at the top, and Servants, &c. at the bottom.—The new productions of Drury-Lane this ſeaſon, were, "The Doctor and Apothecary," "The Pannel," "The Impoſtors," an alteration of "Coriolanus," "Mary Queen of Scots," "Falſe Appearances," "The Farm Houſe," &c.

At Covent-Garden the veteran Macklin, at the age of ninety, attempted the part of Shylock, for his benefit, May 7th, 1789, but finding, in the courſe of it, his memory fail him, he was obliged to give up the remainder of the part to Mr. Ryder, and that evening retired from the Stage; he acquainted the audience himſelf with the cauſe of his inability to proceed, and received every teſtimony of ſympathy and reſpect which a Britiſh public could give; about four years after

Mr. Macklin's two pieces of "The Man of the World," and "Love a-la-Mode," were printed by ſubſcription, under the direction of Mr. Murphy, and the liberal patronage afforded on the occaſion produced profits to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds, with which an annuity of 200l. was purchaſed for Mr. Macklin, and 75l. per annum for his wife, in caſe ſhe ſurvived him.—though he was often killed by the newſpapers, lived till the year 1797, and till within a ſhort time of his death went frequently to the theatres where he has been obſerved to applaud ſeveral performers as they affected or pleaſed him, he ſat always in the pit, cloſe to the Orcheſtra. We have already noticed Mr. Macklin's theatrical campaigns from the year 1733, his retirement and return to the Stage, and cloſe our account with obſerving, that as he was the moſt experienced, ſo he certainly was, in *ſome* inſtances, the beſt actor of our times.

The moſt ſucceſsful productions at Covent-Garden this year, were, "The Highland Reel," "The Child of Nature," "The Toy," "The Little Hunchback," and "The Dramatiſt," the Harlequinade of "Aladdin, or the wonderful Lamp," a ballet called, "The Giant Defeated," and the grand ſerious pantomime of "The Death of Captain Cook."

During the Hay-Market ſeaſon of 1789, the Opera Houſe was burnt down, the audience in the little theatre, which was open at the time, were very much alarmed, but no accident happened

pened in conſequence; a ſplendid theatre has ſince riſen out of the ruins of the old one, (Phœnix like) in which, as will hereafter be obſerved, the Drury-Lane company performed while their own theatre was rebuilding.—A Mrs. Taylor made her appearance at the Hay-Market, and was well received.—The Dramatic productions were, "Ut Pictura Poeſis, or, the Enraged Muſician," "Half an Hour after Supper," "As it Should be," "The Family Party," "Married Man," "The Friends, or, Benevolent Planters," "The Comet," and "The Battle of Hexham."

At Drury-Lane in 1789-0, the tragedy of "Marcella," by Mr. Hayley, was got up in oppoſition to the ſame play, by the ſame author, at the other houſe; Mr. Hayley, however, did not wiſh it to be done at Drury-Lane, where it met with no ſucceſs, on account of the hurry they were in to precede its repreſentation at Covent-Garden, beſides the above at Drury-Lane were produced "The Falſe Friend," "The Iſland of St. Marguerite," "The Haunted Tower," "The Adventurers," "The Spoil'd Child," and "No Song No Supper," with ſeveral revived plays, and a pantomime called "Harlequin's Frolicks, or, the Power of Witchcraft.

At Govent-Garden Mr. Hayley's tragedy of "Marcella," met a better reception than at Drury-Lane, though at the latter theatre it had the ſtart. Mr. Quick this ſeaſon performed the part of King Richard the Third, for his own benefit, and though the peculiarity of his voice was ſometimes againſt him, he played the part with great

judgement, the receipts were upwards of 430l. an almoſt unparalleled houſe, before the late alterations at Covent-Garden; an addreſs was on this occaſion written by Mr. Merry, and ſpoken by Mr. Ryder, which had much comic effect.—On September the 30th, 1789, Mr. Farren, (who had been many years a reſpectable member of Covent-Garden Theatre,) departed this life, as did alſo Mr. Booth, July 7th, 1789, whoſe attention to buſineſs and uniform regularity in his profeſſion, joined to abilities of conſiderable extent, cauſed him to be much lamented by all who knew him.

October 14th, 1789, died Miſs Catley, of celebrated muſical memory; ſhe was ſaid to be married to General Laſcelles, at whoſe houſe ſhe died; her theatrical entré we have noticed in its place, prior to which, being born in the loweſt ſphere of life, and indebted to the caſual bounty of publicans and their cuſtomers for their ſupport, ſhe, by her own merit and powers, as a ſinger, unaided by friends or intereſt, became one of the foremoſt favourites of the Engliſh ſtage; ſometime after her appearance at Vauxhall and Covent-Garden, ſhe lived under the patronage of Sir Francis Blake Delaval, between whom and her father a curious law-ſuit took place for her detention, it being urged by Mr. Catley, that one Bates, a Muſician, to whom ſhe was apprenticed, had, in conjunction with Fraine, an Attorney, ſold her to Sir Francis. Miſs Catley and her protector appeared in Court, the young lady was, by an Habeas, diſcharged from the

cuſtody

cuſtody of her keeper, (to whom her indentures had been transferred,) but the Counſel of Sir Francis obſerving that Miſs C. might now make her election, the choice reſted on Sir Francis, with whom ſhe returned home; but on a Rule being granted by Lord Mansfield to ſhew cauſe why Sir F. ſhould not be proſecuted in common with Bates, for ſeducing and proſtituting Miſs Catley, Sir Francis had coſts to pay to a very conſiderable amount.

Though Miſs Catley's character, in a particular point of view, may appear not quite ſo good as might be wiſhed, yet ſhe had a heart which richly over-balanced thoſe deviations which circumſtance and ſituation might completely apologize for.

Her œconomy, liberality, charity, and ſubmiſſive attention to Mr. Laſcelles, of whom ſhe was perfectly independent, added to her very rare profeſſional abilities, will ſpeak in her favour, when the writer of theſe pages ſhall be no more;—and though there are prudes upon prudes who have much to ſay againſt her, yet we could cite numberleſs traits in her favour, which would put faſtidious cenſure to the bluſh, and better the morals of many, who are apt to blame, by ſaying to them,

"Go, and do thou likewiſe."

Very few pieces were ſucceſsful this ſeaſon at Covent-Garden, the principal of which, beſides the tragedy above mentioned, were "The Widow of Malabar," "The Cruſade," "The Female

Adventurer," "Eudora," "Nootka Sound," and "Harlequin's Chaplet."

At the Hay-Market, in the year 1790, Mr. Colman, ſen. labouring under a mental derangement, his ſon was obliged to take the managerial department, which he has from that time executed with particular eclat. That eccentric and favourite comedian, Mr. Edwin, departed this life the 1ſt of July, 1790, his loſs was and has been very ſeverely felt both at this and Covent-Garden Theatres; O'Keefe and Edwin played into each others hands; the one was born to act what the other wrote, and ſo great was the ſimilarity of conception in O'Keefe, and expreſſion in Edwin, that, but for the mutual ſupport they received from each other, the public had probably been deprived of the exertions of both.

The novelties this ſeaſon, at the Hay-Market, were, "Try Again," "New Spain, or Love in Mexico," "Modern Breakfaſt," &c.

The Drury-Lane ſeaſon of 1790-1, was remarkable for being the laſt campaign made on the old boards, during which, nothing of moment occured but the production of "Better late than Never," "The Seige of Belgrade," a pantomime called "The Fairy Favour, or Harlequin Animated," with a number of other pieces which were unſucceſsful.

Mr. Roſs, who has been frequently mentioned in the courſe of this little work, died September 14th, 1790, he was born in 1728. and his father (a lawyer) is ſaid to have diſinherited him for going on the Stage; when he left the Stage in 1778,

1778, he was much diſtreſſed, but afterwards relieved by an anonymous annuity of 60l. which afterwards proved to be the gift of his friend and ſchool-fellow, Admiral Barrington, with whom Mr. Roſs had been educated at Weſtminſter.

Mr. Joſeph Munden, from the Theatres Royal Cheſter and Newcaſtle, made his entré this ſeaſon at Covent Garden, (as a ſubſtitute for Edwin,) in the characters of Sir Francis Gripe and Jemmy Jumps:—in the latter, though by no means his beſt performance, he gave infinite ſatisfaction, but his acting in Sir Francis was much ſuperior. His Majeſty ſoon after commanded the play, and was highly entertained with Mr. Munden, whoſe forte is by no means confined to the *vis comica*, for his performance of Old Dornton, and ſimilar characters, poſſeſſes a degree of pathetic intereſt highly to his credit.—Mr. Munden is alſo remarkable for the care and attention with which he dreſſes his characters, particularly when performing the principal Witch in Macbeth.

Mr. John Beard, whoſe talents we have formerly mentioned, died at Hampton, aged 75, on the 5th of February, 1791.—His firſt marriage, as before obſerved, was with Lady Henrietta Herbert; his ſecond was with the daughter of Mr. Rich, at whoſe death Mr. Beard ſucceeded to the Management of Covent Garden Theatre.—His abilities as a ſinger, and his character as a gentleman, were many years conſpi-

cuous:

cuous: he died poſſeſſed of conſiderable property, and was interred in the church vault at Hampton.

The moſt favourite productions at Covent Garden this ſeaſon were the "German Hotel," the "Divertiſement," written by Mr. Croſs, purpoſely for the introduction of a number of Mr. Dibdin's moſt favourite ſongs; the "Picture of Paris," the "School for Arrogance," "Two Strings to your Bow," (from the "Hotel, or Double Valet," of Captain Jephſon,) the "Woodman," "Modern Antiques," "Lorenzo," "Wild Oats," and a pantomime ballet, called "Tippoo Saib."

On November the 26th, 1791, Mr. Ryder died at Sandy Mount, Dublin. This gentleman, whoſe appearance at Covent-Garden has been noticed, was for many years a wonderful and deſerving favourite at Dublin, where he was manager of the Smock Alley Theatre for ſome time; but the cabals of his performers, added to ſome little want of œconomy in his lady, (notwithſtanding he at that time gained a capital prize in the Lottery,) ſoon made him a Bankrupt. When he left Ireland, he was ſo much reſpected by the public, that medals, executed by Moſſop, were ſtruck in commemoration of him.—Some time prior to his death, his two daughters came out at Covent Garden and the Haymarket.

The new plays, &c. at the Haymarket in 1791 were "The Kentiſh Barons," "Next Door Neighbours," the "Surrender of Calais," with ſome others not ſo ſucceſsful.

The Drury Lane Company on September the 22d,

22d, 1792, opened the New Opera Houſe, with a prelude called "Poor Old Drury."—The extraordinary expences which attended the engaging this magnificent ſtructure, added to many others incurred by the removal of ſcenery, adapting it to the houſe, alteration of the ſtage to fit it, &c. &c. &c. obliged the Managers to raiſe the price of the boxes to 6s. and of the pit to 3s. 6d.—On opening the theatre much diſcontent prevailed among the audience, partly owing to the above advance, and partly to the inconvenience of the entrances. Mr. Kemble was called for, and after he had for ſome time addreſſed the audience in an explanatory way, order was reſtored.

Some very illiberal remarks in the public prints appeared againſt, and were fully refuted by Mrs. Jordan, on account of her not appearing, when prevented by indiſpoſition one evening, in Matilda, in the opera of "Richard Cœur de Lion." She alſo, with great propriety, addreſſed the audience on ſome hints which, on the ſame occaſion, had been thrown out againſt her private character; the public received and ſanctioned her with a degree of applauſe and approbation that entirely triumphed over the inſignificant attempts of her enemies.

A Miſs Brand made her appearance at the Opera Houſe in a tragedy called "Huniades," written by herſelf: the other entertainments brought out were "The Fugitive," "The Algerine Slaves," (altered from the "Strangers at Home,")

Home,") and ſeveral benefit pieces, which were not repeated.

September the 1ſt, 1791, Mr. Fawcett made his debut at Covent Garden Theatre in the part of Caleb, in "He Wou'd be a Soldier."—This character, ſo exactly in the line of Edwin, gained Mr. Fawcett much reputation, which he afterwards encreaſed by performing Jerry Sneak, and ſeveral other characters.—His abilities have continued to improve on the town, and as Edwin was to O'Keefe, ſo is Fawcett to him, and every writer of comic eccentricity. Covent Garden produced this year, in the literary way, "Notoriety," "The Road to Ruin," "The Iriſhman in London," "Juſt in Time," &c. beſides the pantomimic and ballet performances of "Oſcar and Malvina," the "Pruſſian Feſtival," and "Blue Beard, or the Flight of Harlequin."

Mrs. Banniſter took leave of the audience at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket on the 5th of September, 1792, after ſpeaking an appropriate addreſs;—it was her own benefit, and the audience, who teſtified their reſpect for her, and regret at her departure, were numerous and brilliant to a degree.

The above Theatre opened on June the 15th, with an occaſional prelude called "Poor Old Haymarket, or Two Sides of the Gutter;" its other dramatic novelties were "All in Good Humour," "Young Men and Old Women," the "Enchanted Wood," and "Croſs Partners."

The Drury Lane Company at the Opera Houſe in 1792-3 were remarkable only for the introduction

duction of the "Priſoner," the "Pirates," "Oſmyn and Daraxa," the "Prize," the "Rival Siſters," "Falſe Colours," &c.

Covent Garden Theatre opened this year with an entire new face—the wonderful alterations which brought it to its preſent ſtate of ſpacious elegance, and which were ſo expeditiouſly made, were, at the ſame time, ſo extremely expenſive, (amounting to 25,000l.) that Mr. Harris was obliged to raiſe the prices to the level of thoſe taken by the Drury Lane Company:—this circumſtance, added to the want of a Shilling Gallery, had ſo prejudicial an effect in the firſt inſtance, that the performance on the night of opening was rendered one ſcene of diſcontent and confuſion, neither play nor farce being properly finiſhed. Mr. Lewis aſſured the audience, on this occaſion, that a One Shilling Gallery ſhould, as ſoon as poſſible, be erected, but that without the total ruin of the managers, it was utterly impoſſible to open the theatre for leſs than the advanced prices. The oppoſition, in the courſe of two or three evenings, entirely died away, a Gallery, as promiſed, was ſhortly after erected, and opened, and the efforts of Mr. Harris have ſince continued, with their former ſucceſs, to render his theatre a ſucceſsful ſcene of attraction.

An Occaſional Prelude, written by Mr. Cumberland, commenced the Seaſon, which afterwards produced "Hartford Bridge, or the Skirts of the Camp," "Columbus," "Every One has his Fault," the "Midnight Wanderers," "How to grow Rich," "Sprigs of Laurel," "The Pad,"

Pad," &c. with the ballets of the "Governor, or Creolian Inſurrection," the "Shipwreck, or French Ingratitude," and a pantomime called "Harlequin's Muſeum, or Mother Shipton Triumphant."

On the 3d of April, 1793, died Mr. James Wrighten, for a number of years Prompter at Drury Lane and the Haymarket Theatres. Mr. Powel ſucceeded him at Drury Lane, and Mr. Waldron at the Haymarket. Mrs. Wrighten, whoſe vocal performances were for years ſo eminently known, was wife to this Gentleman, from whom ſhe ſome time ſince eloped with her three daughters, but after performing with particular ſucceſs for a ſhort period in the new theatrical world lately created in North America, ſhe has herſelf paid the debt of Nature. On the death of Mr. Wrighten two benefits were given, one at Drury Lane and the other at the Haymarket, for the advantage of his orphan children.

The Haymarket in 1793, (after having, under the management of Mr. Colman, jun. produced the "London Hermit," the "Mountaineers," and "Caernarvon Caſtle,") was, by an arrangement of the manager with the proprietors of the Drury Lane Company, who neither being able to finiſh their own theatre time enough for the Winter ſeaſon, nor to engage the Opera Houſe, which now opened for its own exhibitions, continued the ſeaſon of the Little Theatre, which, on the 3d of February, was the ſcene of a moſt dreadful calamity; for on his Majeſty's going to the theatre, the crowd was ſo exceſſive, that a number

number of unfortunate people of both ſexes were thrown down, trod on, and cruſhed to death, and a much greater number were wounded, lamed, and otherwiſe dreadfully injured. This melancholy circumſtance will not be much wondered at when it is reflected that not even the ſpacious accommodations of the two great theatres can, in ſimilar inſtances, prevent danger; and if they, on ſuch occaſions, are frequently inſufficient for the reception and accommodation of public reſort, it is by no means ſurpriſing that the preſſure of ſo great a body of people in a ſmaller ſpace ſhould occaſion what has been related: if the public would always calculate on the above principle, and proportion their eager exertions for admittance with a little reflection, ſuch terrible incidents would never take place.—The pieces performed at the Haymarket, during its winter appriation, were the "Children in the Wood," (by Mr. Morton,) the "Prodigal," (taken by Mr. Waldron from Hill's "Fatal Extravagance.") "My Grandmother," (by Hoare,) "Heigho for a Huſband," (altered by Mr. Waldron from a former piece of his own writing,) the "Purſe, or Benevolent Tar," (by Mr. Croſs,) the "Box Lobby Challenge," (by Mr. Cumberland,) and "Harlequin Peaſant, or a Pantomime Rehearſed."

On the 13th of March, 1793, the New Theatre Royal in Drury Lane opened with a Grand Selection of Sacred Muſic. The extent, embelliſhments, and accommodations of this theatre bid fair to render it, when the external part of it

is finiſhed, the firſt building of the kind in Europe:—ſo many particular deſcriptions of it are already in print, that we ſhall forbear to occupy the room a minute account of it would take; it is ſufficient to ſay that it is worthy its eſtabliſhment, as a principal theatre in the metropolis of Great Britain. It opened for Dramatic Exhibitions on the 21ſt of April, 1793, with Macbeth, which was got up with many ſplendid and novel arrangements, particularly in the dreſſes and machinery of the witches, and in the Banquet ſcene where the *visible* appearance of Banquo's ghoſt was totally omitted, which occaſioned many arguments among theatric critic's; however, at Drury, Banquo's ghoſt continues to appear only to the "mind's eye" of Macbeth.

Mr. Kemble ſpoke an addreſs on the opening of the houſe, which was written by the Right Honourable Major-General Fitzpatrick; and the preſent Mr. Colman wrote an Epilogue, which was ſpoken by Miſs Farren, in the character of Houſe-keeper to the new edifice, which ſhe was deſired to ſhew with all its curioſities to thoſe who honoured it with a viſit; in the courſe of the Epilogue a real current of water was diſplayed, and a waterman rowing a boat to and fro on it, the iron curtain was alſo let down as a guard to prevent the communication of fire from the ſtage to the audience part of the theatre, and at the concluſion of the Epilogue a ſcene of Shakeſpeare's Monument was exhibited, decorated with the Mulberry tree, and attended by the tragic and comic muſes, with a numerous group of Shake-

ſpeare's

ſpeare's characters, ſome of whom ſung, "All ſhall yield to the Mulberry tree," and the ſcene finiſhed with, "Where the bee ſips, &c."—The new theatre is reckoned to hold 771l. 6s.—The new pieces brought out the firſt ſeaſon were, "The Jew," "Lodoiſka," and "The Glorious Firſt of June," given as a benefit for the widows and orphans of thoſe ſeamen who fell on the memorable victory gained by Lord Howe in 1794; Mr. Sheridan wrote the dialogue of the piece, and ſeveral ſongs were written for it by the Duke of Leeds, Lord Mulgrave, Mr. Richardſon, Mrs. Robinſon, &c. On account of the immenſe expenditure neceſſary to the opening the theatre, there were no benefits given to the performers this ſeaſon, a circumſtance which fell very hard on many of them; a conſideration of little weight with theatrical managers.

On the 24th of November, 1793, Mrs. Webb, of Covent-Garden and the Hay-Market theatres, departed this life; the ſize of this lady had proved an inexhauſtable fund for punning to the diurnal editors, who, on every occaſion, would obſerve how *great* ſhe was in ſuch or ſuch a part; it is true, however, that O'Keefe and other authors literally *took meaſure* of her for parts in their pieces; as an actreſs ſhe was ever reſpectable, in private life particularly ſo.

We have omitted to mention, that a ſeaſon or two prior to this, the venerable Mrs. Pitt, of Covent-Garden theatre, left the ſtage; Mrs. Pitt in the characters of the Nurſe in "Romeo and Juliet," Deborah Woodcock, the Widow Racket

in the "Commiſſary," Dorcas in "Cymon," and Roſina, &c. &c. will be remembered for her truly natural and comic acting as long as theatric memory can laſt; next to Macklin, ſhe was the oldeſt performer of her time, and went through a ſeries of reſpectable dramatic buſineſs, for upwards of fifty years, at Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane, but principally at the former theatre; the laſt part ſhe played was Dorcas in "Cymon," when ſhe was encored in her ſong of "I tremble at Seventy-two," though nearly that age at the time of ſinging it. Mrs. Pitt died Dec. 18th, 1799, at the age of 79; and to uſe the language of a Newſpaper on the occaſion, "her children and grand children to whom ſhe was an excellent parent and firm friend, have to reflect in mitigation of their regret, that the termination of her life was occaſioned by a gradual decay of nature, and that ſhe was in poſſeſſion of her faculties to the laſt hour of exiſtence."

The ſucceſsful productions in 1793-4, at Covent-Garden, were, "The World in a Village," "Love's Frailties," (the firſt play publiſhed at 2s.) "The Travellers in Switzerland," "Fontainville Foreſt," "Netley Abbey," "Britiſh Fortitude," "Naples Bay," "Love and Honour," "The Packet Boat," "Siege of Meaux," "The Sicilian Romance," "A Loyal Effuſion," &c.

During the Hay-Market ſeaſon of 1794, Mr. Colman ſenior died at the age of 61; the memory of Mr. Colman's abilities as an author, will be much better preſerved in his numerous productions

ductions than by any eulogium we could paſs on him; much has been ſaid, and with truth, of his liberality and patronage to other authors, his punctuallity as a manager and a man of buſineſs, and his reſpectability of private character:—his death was much lamented by his ſon, who now ſtands an able and proſperous ſubſtitute to fulfil the public avocations of his father.—The dramatic productions of 1794, at the Hay-Market, were, "Auld Robin Gray," "How to be Happy," "Rule Britannia," "Britain's Glory," and "The Apparition."

Drury-Lane theatre, in February 1795, loſt one of its principal comic veterans, in the perſon of Mr. Parſons, whoſe wonderful merit as an actor had, for upwards of thirty years, been the admiration of the public; the firſt character he played was Filch, in the year 1763, but his repreſentation of whimſical old men was the means by which he found the neareſt way to the hearts of his auditors; Mr. Parſons died in very good circumſtances, and, had he lived a little longer, meant to have retired into the country, an aſthmatic complaint was the cauſe of his death. With regard to other particulars of this celebrated comedian, ſo much has been ſaid, and is at preſent publiſhed in the ſeveral "Hiſtories of his Life," "Anecdotes," &c. that it would be ſuperfluous for us to make any addition to what is "here ſet down," it is ſufficient to conclude our account by joining in the general opinion, "that he died reſpected and lamented by all who knew him."

We have alſo to record that, during the ſame

ſeaſon, (but in February, 1794,) Mr. Baddeley, another old ſtandard of the Drury-Lane corps, paid the awful debt of nature, with no leſs regret to *his* ſurviving acquaintance, than was felt by thoſe of the Gentleman above mentioned. Mr. Baddeley's death was rather ſudden, his illneſs commenced juſt as he finiſhed dreſſing for the part of Moſes, in "The School for Scandal," and being unable to perform the character, he was conveyed home and expired the next day.

Mr. Baddeley has made ſure of a laſting memorial to his honour by bequeathing his houſe and premiſes at Moulſey, for an aſylum to decayed actors and actreſſes, who, (when the net produce of the eſtate amounts to a certain annual income,) are to be allowed penſions; the words "Baddeley's Aſylum," are to be placed in front of the building, and a head of Garrick, with a number of theatrical portraits and other embelliſhments, are left for the internal decorations of the manſion.

Mr. Baddeley, as a friendly token of remembrance to his brother performers at Drury-Lane, left alſo,

"ONE HUNDRED POUNDS, three per cent. "conſolidated Bank annuities, which produce "three pounds per annum, to purchaſe a twelfth "cake, with wine and punch, which the Ladies "and Gentlemen of Drury-Lane theatre are "requeſted to partake of, every twelfth night, "in the great Green Room."

The following particulars alſo appear in Mr. Baddeley's Will, relative to the theatrical aſylum at Moulſey:

"Penſioners

" Penſioners to ſpend twenty ſhillings every " year, in honour of the birth of the founder."

" Penſioners to (be allowed to) give certain " ſmall ſums to the poor of Moulſey, in order " to conſtitute them, as inhabitants of the aſylum, " reſpectable in the eyes of their neighbours."

The laſt paragraph indicates a conſideration and goodneſs of heart rarely to be met with, Mr. Baddeley has not only made a reſpectable proviſion for a certain number of his profeſſional brethren, but by conſtituting them the diſtributors of his further benevolence to the needy around them, a reſpect due to the members of the profeſſion, but rarely paid to any who accept, from misfortune, the benefit of bequeathed charity.

Mr. Baddeley's forte, as an actor, lay principally in the portraiture of foreign eccentricities, which his travels enabled him to do with much nature and propriety; of this caſt his performance of Canton, in " The Clandeſtine Marriage," and Gaſconade in " Harlequin's Invaſion," will be, by dramatic connoiſſeurs, long remembered; Mr. Baddeley's performance of comic old men was alſo particularly reſpectable.

The new pieces which ſucceeded at Drury-Lane, in the ſeaſon of 1794-5, were, " The Wedding Day," " The Cherokee," " The Wheel of Fortune," " Jack of Newberry," " Firſt Love," " The Adopted Child," and a grand ballet ſpectable, principally ſupported by performers from the Opera, called " Alexander the Great, or the conqueſt of Perſia."

Covent-Garden loſt alſo, in the ſeaſon of 1794-5, a reſpectable

a reſpectable performer by the death of Mr. Farren, who was advertiſed to perform for his own benefit, which, we believe, was meant for the very day on which he died; he had for ſome years filled his ſituation at the the theatre with much ſatisfaction to the audience and his employers; his widow had the produce of the intended benefit; Mr. Farren's firſt appearance at Covent-Garden, was in the part of Othello, in the year 1782.

The moſt favourite productions, at Covent-Garden, in 1794-5, were, "The Rage," "The Myſteries of the Caſtle," "Crotchet Lodge," "England Preſerved," "Life's Vagaries," "The Iriſh Mimic," "The Bank Note," "The Deſerted Daughter," "The Death of Captain Faulknor," "Naval Volunteers," "England's Glory," "The Poor Sailor," and "The Secret Tribunal," together with the grand ballet of "Hercules and Omphale," a ſuperb maſque, called, "Windſor Caſtle," and Mr. Lonſdale's pantomime of "Mago and Dago."

Mr. Barret, of the Hay-Market theatre, died ſome little time previous to its opening in 1795; Mr. Barret died at Mancheſter, of which theatre he had for ſome years been a very favourite member, during the winter ſeaſons.

Mr. Colman now (by a grant from his Majeſty,) began to act as patentee of the little theatre, which opened with an occaſional prelude, called "New Hay at the Old Market,"—this ſeaſon was remarkable for a legal deciſion relative to an action which

Mr. Colman brought againſt Mr. Wathen, as manager of the Richmond theatre, for performing certain pieces of which Mr. C. poſſeſſed the copy-right; the verdict was, however, given to Mr. Wathen, a circumſtance of much ſurpriſe to dramatic authors, who ſeem thereby to be much curbed in regard to literary property; a reconciliation afterwards took place between Meſſrs. Colman and Wathen, and the latter was engaged at the Hay-Market theatre.—The productions at the Hay-Market, beſides the above mentioned prelude, were, "Zorinſki," "Love and Money," and "Three and the Deuce,"

At Drury-Lane, in 1795-6, Mrs. Powell undertook and performed the part of Hamlet with unbounded applauſe, which ſhe had in the preceding ſeaſon alſo experienced in playing Young Norval. This Lady's firſt appearance was at the Hay-Market, where ſhe did not remain but came out ſome time afterwards at Drury-Lane; Alicia and Juliet were her firſt attempts, and ſhe has ſince, in tragedy, met with ſuch deſerving approbation, that were ſhe fairly brought forward, there is little doubt but her abilities would ſoon raiſe her to the top of her profeſſion.

Mrs. Jordan gave proof of exquiſite tragic abilities by her performance of Ophelia, and afterwards of Juliet, both of which characters ſhe frequently repeats.

Mr. Benſley and Mrs. Kemble both took leave of the ſtage this ſeaſon; Mr. Benſley had many years been a particular favourite in ſeveral characters, to which he gave much originality and

effect

effect by means of a voice which, though at firſt apparently diſagreeable, ſoon became not only reconcileable to the ear, but of advantage to the ſpeaker; to elucidate this, we need only mention Mr. Benſley's performance of Malvolio and Proſpero.

Mr. Benſon, who was rapidly gaining favour with the town, had the dreadful misfortune to fall from the top of the houſe where he lodged in Brydges-ſtreet, and was killed on the ſpot; Mr. Benſon had been indiſpoſed, and it is conjectured that a fit of delirium, occaſioned the ſhocking accident. A benefit was given to his widow, which turned out very productive; Mr. Lewis, of Covent-Garden theatre, performed on the occaſion; as did Miſs Wallis for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Storace, who died during the ſeaſon.

After long promiſe and much expectation, the play of Vortigern, ſuppoſed to be written by Shakeſpeare, was brought forward at Drury-Lane theatre on the 2nd. of April, 1796, the houſe was crowded in every part, and the audience, after waiting longer than their uſual time, gave the play every poſſible chance of ſucceſs, but its illegitimacy appeared ſo ſtrong, that condemnation was very juſtly accorded; we wave intermixing any further opinions here on a ſubject which from ſo many abler pens has engroſſed the attention of the town.—The other productions at Drury-Lane, were, "Man of Ten Thouſand," "The Smugglers," "Almeyda," "Mahmoud, Prince of Perſia," (the muſic of which was the laſt

laſt compoſition of Storace,) a pantomime called "Harlequin Captive, or the Magic Fire," and Mr. Colman's celebrated piece of the "Iron Cheſt," which, though it ſucceeded when afterwards brought out at the Hay-Market, proved at Drury-Lane to have been in the wrong *box*; Mr. Braham made his entré at Drury-Lane this ſeaſon.

At Covnet-Garden in 1795-6, Mr. and Mrs. Knight, from Bath, were engaged; Madame Mara performed Mandane, in "Artaxerxes." The new productions were, "Speculation," "Days of Yore," "The Way to Get Married," "Lock and Key," "The Doldrum," "The Lad of the Hills, or the Wicklow Gold Mine," and a ſplendid pantomime by Mr. Lonſdale, called, "Merry Sherwood, or Harlequin Foreſter."

The Hay-Market ſeaſon of 1796, graced its theatric corps with the addition of Mr. Elliſton, who made his appearance in June, in the characters of Octavian and Vapour; the originality and excellence exhibited by Mr. Elliſton in thoſe parts gained him inſtantly the unanimous voice of the town in his favour, and in the part of the Jew, in Cumberland's comedy, he ſtill added to the eclat of his firſt performances; Mr. Elliſton being under an article with the Bath managers, made, by their permiſſion, a kind of periodical engagement with the proprietors of Covent-Garden theatre, where, for ſome time, he performed once a fortnight with encreaſing ſucceſs.

Mr. Colman conceiving that juſtice had not been

been done at Drury-Lane to his play of the "Iron Cheſt," brought it out, as before obſerved, at his own theatre; Mr. Elliſton performed the character originally played by Mr. Kemble, to whoſe charge Mr Colman (in a preface to his play) laid "many weighty matters." The "Iron Cheſt" was well received at the Hay-Market, and run a number of nights; the price Mr. Colman was to have received of the Drury-Lane proprietors for this piece was reported to be one thouſand pounds.

Beſides the above, the Hay-Market produced "Bannian Day," "Don Pedro," "The Magic Banner," &c.

The unſettled ſtate of Drury-Lane theatre preventing its being opened at the uſual period in 1796, the managers of Covent-Garden commenced their career on the 12th of September with "Hamlet," and the "Doldrum;"—during the vacation, conſiderable improvements had been made in the theatre and its avenues, equally commodious to the audience, as advantageous to the managers;—the boxes being ſo enlarged as to contain upwards of 40l. per night additional.

The firſt novelty we meet with is a Mrs. Addiſon in the part of Roſetta in "Love in a Village," but whoſe talents did not reach above thoſe of the *middling* gentry with whom the manager was plentifully ſupplied.—Mr. Elliſton, who had acquired ſome popularity at the Hay-Market, appeared in the part of Sheva, in Cumberland's "Jew," and was acknowledged to perform the character in a very correct and impreſſive

preſſive manner. To theſe followed, in a few days, Mrs. Norton, or Mrs. Gilbert, who played Lady Waitfort in the "Dramatiſt," and in parts where it was not neceſſary that the actreſs ſhould be *perfectly lovely*, or where *size* could be a recommendation, the lady had much claim to notice.

The 31ſt of September produced Mr. Murray, from Bath, in the character of Shylock, and Bagatelle in "The Poor Soldier:"—Mr. Murray's reputation had been long firmly eſtabliſhed in the country. The character was not perhaps the moſt judiciouſly ſelected for the full diſplay of his abilities; his conception indeed proved him to be wholly maſter of his author, and ſome of the ſcenes were finely diſcriminated, though in other parts he ſomewhat exceeded the bounds of moderation;—with a good figure, an expreſſive countenance, a gentlemanly deportment, and a pleaſing voice, eſpecially in level ſpeaking, Mr. Murray will always intereſt, though he may never aſtoniſh an audience.

Early in October, Mr. Waddy, from Norwich, came out in Conolly, in "The School for Wives;"—he had been long the favourite low comedian at Norwich, but on the boards of Covent-Garden, though he eſcapes cenſure, he certainly does not obtain applauſe.—On the ſame evening there appeared a Miſs Townſhend, (ſaid to be a relation of Miſs Heard's, of Drury-Lane,) in the part of Roſina, but of whom we know nothing further.

Mr. Hargrave, or Snow, was introduced as

the repreſentative of Octavian, in "The Mountaineers," a prrt which had been performed in a ſtyle of incomparable excellence by Mr. Kemble. He afterwards played Zaphna, on the firſt appearance of Miſs Allingham, whom we ſhall preſently notice, in which he excited the *ſmile*, but not of approbation, and ſeems to have only added one to the long liſt of *evaneſcents*.

On the 7th of October Mr. O'Keeffe's farce of "Wicklow Mountains," curtailed from his "Lad of the Hill," (and *better* in proportion as made ſhorter,) was played for the firſt time with ſome applauſe, or at leaſt laughter.

Miſs Allingham, who had been announced with great formality, performed Palmira in "Mahomet," but without that degree of ſucceſs with which the managers had flattered both her and themſelves; nor was ſhe more diſtinguiſhed in her perſonification of Juliet; after ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts ſhe retired to the country.

Mrs. Second, formerly Miſs Mahon, was moſt favourably received, as a *ſinger*, in the part of Emily, in "The Woodman;" and as the dialogue of modern opera (to which, however, this may be an exception) is ſeldom of much conſequence, this lady's deficiencies as a ſpeaker were generally overlooked;—what the wits ſaid of her might be applied to many of the vocal tribe—they ſing like *nightingales*, but ſpeak like *magpies*.

From the players we paſs for a moment to plays:—"Fortune's Fool," a comedy by Reynolds, and poſſeſſing all his whimſicality, was

at this time, the cloſe of October, received with conſiderable ſucceſs.—"Olympus in an Uproar," altered by O'Keeffe from his "Golden Pippen," was *coldly* received by a very *thin* audience; it deſerves only to be noticed from a ridiculous attempt of Delpini to ridicule the dancing of Pariſot; a burleſque that only tended to ſhew in a ſtronger point the elegance of the caricatured performer.—"Abroad and at Home," an after-piece, and the firſt dramatic attempt of Mr. Holman, was very well received. The pantomime of "Harlequin and Oberon" was exhibited with ſucceſs and admiration to the holiday viſitors.

The firſt novelty of 1797 was Morton's "Cure for the Heart Ache," which was well received;—"Bantry Bay," a temporary effuſion of loyalty occaſioned by the defeat of the French in Ireland. Mrs. Inchbald's comedy of "Wives as they were and Maids as they are," had a ſucceſsful run. "Raymond and Agnes," chiefly taken from the novel of the Monk, as a well deſigned ſpectacle, was much favoured.—In the latter end of April Mr. Hoare's "Italian Villagers," aided by Shield's muſic, was a pleaſing and not unſucceſsful attempt to unite the ſerious and comic into one performance.

A variety of new pieces were got up for the benefit of different performers, few of which were ſaved from the pit of oblivion, nor need their loſs to be regretted, unleſs we except the comedy of "The Tatlers," ſaid to have been written by the author of the "Suſpicious Huſband," and fortunately preſerved for the benefit of Mr. Holman.

—The theatre closed on the 18th of June, 1797, with the comedy of "Love for Love," and "The Devil to Pay," in both which pieces Mrs. Jordan performed for the benefit of Mr. Haymes.

Another night was, however, added, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of those who had perished in the action of the preceding February 14, under Lord St. Vincent; the entertainments were, "The Country Girl," "Peggy's Love," "No Song no Supper," and "Cupid and Psyche;" Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Abingdon, Madame Storace, and the whole troop of opera dancers came forward, and the house was much crowded.—The house was again opened on the 21st. for the benefit of the Lying-in Hospital at Bayswater.

On September 20, 1796, Drury-Lane theatre opened with "The Prize," "The Child of Nature," and "High Life Below Stairs." Miss Mellon played Amanthis; and Mr. Wroughton was announced as acting manager in the room of Mr. Kemble, who was, however, engaged to perform, and on the 30th appeared in the part of Penruddock in "The Wheel of Fortune," with great applause.

"The Triumph of Love," an operatical ballet, introduced Parisot to the English stage, on the 1st of October:—the conversion of the national theatre to such exhibitions occasioned some censure on the managers, but they were soon swept away to their proper station, and nothing remained but the occasional appearance of Parisot, whose uncommon elegance in a variety of movements and attitudes,

attitudes, and whoſe remarkable eaſe and delicacy in all her exertions conſtantly attracted the admiration and applauſe of the audience. Dowton, from the Tunbridge Wells theatre, appeared in Cumberland's "Jew;" a character extremely favourable to any performer, and in which Mr. Dowton received his ſhare of applauſe.—A Mr. Hamlin appeared in Douglas; and a Mr. Campbell in Charles, in the "School for Scandal; "The Charity Boy," a muſical entertainment by Mr. Croſs, failed of ſucceſs.

Jephſon's tragedy of the "Conſpiracy," was performed on the 15th of November, but was ſo cold and heavy, that all the acting of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons could not extend its exiſtence. —On the 6th of the following month, the "Force of Ridicule," a comedy by Mr. Holcroft, was attempted to be performed; but ſo loud was the diſapprobation, certainly at too early a period to form a judgement, that the play was promiſed to be withdrawn, if the audience would only ſuffer it to go on for that night: it ended, however, in an uproar of overwhelming cenſure. This play had been announced for the 29th of November, and poſtponed in conſequence of the *ſudden* indiſpoſition of Miſs Farren; the audience had their money returned, and Mrs. Siddons played Iſabella to very moderate audience;—Miſs Farren's friends aſſured the public that her indiſpoſition was real; while others attributed her conduct to a diſpute with Miſs De Camp relative to a *ſattin gown*; and a third party aſſigned as a cauſe

the non-payment, by the managers, of ſome pecuniary demands.

The after-piece of the "Shipwreck," by young Arnold, was received with ſome applauſe, and ſtill continues to pleaſe.—Mr. Faulkner, from Dublin, appeared in Oreſtes, for the firſt, and probably the laſt time;—and the "Honey Moon," a comic opera by Mr. W. Linley, after *one* performance, was finally laid aſide.

"Theodoſius," once an admired play, notwithſtanding many defects, was revived, after twenty years baniſhment from this ſtage; Varanes and Athenais were of courſe pourtrayed by Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons; and though the latter might look, ſpeak, and feel like "the daughter of a philoſopher," and though to the talents of Mr. Kemble, on many, or on moſt occaſions, we willingly ſubſcribe, yet we muſt avow that *his* repreſentation of an empaſſioned lover, ſuch as Varanes, rather excite riſibility than ſympathy.—The revival of "Rule a Wife," proved that Dowton, in Cacafogo, poſſeſſed great comic powers; it exhibited Kemble in very high colours as Leon; and Mrs. Powell as the moſt complete repreſentative of Margaritta, that the ſtage can at preſent produce. —"A Friend in Need," by Mr. Hoare, was leſs ſucceſsful than ſome of his former efforts.—Mrs. Worthington made her firſt appearance; and a new piece, or rather revival of the "Firſt of June," congratulatory of the victory obtained by Sir John Jervis, was well received.

On the 8th of April, 1797, Miſs Farren took her

her leave of the ſtage, after performing the part of Lady Teazle in the "School for Scandal;" the houſe was exceſſively crowded; and at the concluſion of the play, Mr. Wroughton, inſtead of the uſually concluding lines of the play, delivered an appropriate poetical addreſs, the performers continuing on the ſtage, and Miſs Farren herſelf in a ſtate of much agitation, ſupported by Mr. King and Miſs Miller; ſhe certainly left no performer who was likely to be admired in her line of acting, and retired to rank and affluence with the applauſe of every one who had been delighted with her performance; and after being the favourite daughter of Thalia for very nearly twenty years,—her firſt appearance being on the 9th of June, 1777, ſhe gave her hand to Lord Derby, on the 8th of May, 1797.

Reynold's comedy of the "Will," was performed on the 19th of April, and ſtill keeps poſſeſſion of the ſtage with a tolerable ſhare of approbation; it abounds with thoſe farcical ſituations which always conſtitute the eſſence of that gentleman's dramas.—Lillo's "Fatal Curioſity" was revived for the benefit of Mrs. Siddons;—The "Queen of Carthage," a heavy production, was revived for a benefit:—The "Laſt of the Family," a new comedy by Cumberland, was performed for *one* night:—The "Wandering Jew," a farce, by Franklin, had better ſucceſs;—a variety of dramatic meteors faintly gleamed for a night and became extinct; and on the 16th of June the theatre cloſed with the uſual addreſs to the audience.

In

In the month of January, the "Battle of Edington," a tragedy by John Penn, Eſq. was performed two or three times at the Hay-Market theatre, at the expence of the author, a man of fortune; but from ſuch a ſet of actors as could be collected on the occaſion, the full effect of the performance could not be felt.

"The Earl of Warrick." and the "Spoiled Child," were alſo performed at this theatre on 9th of February, for the benefit of Mrs. Yates, and her children; the unfortunate death of whoſe huſband, at Pimlico, is in recollection:—the receipts of the houſe were upwards of 200l. but the expences, amounting to near 70l. were paid by the widow, who ſupported the part of Margaret in the play with great ability.

Mr. Colman's theatre opened for the ſeaſon, on the 12th of June, with the "Author," "A Mogul Tale," and "Peeping Tom."—Miſs Andrews appeared, on the next evening, in the "Agreeable Surpriſe;" and a few days afterwards, the "Iriſh Legacy," a muſical farce, by Mr. Arnold, was performed for the firſt and laſt time.—Mr. Philips, a pupil of Dr. Arnold's, made an unſucceſsful attempt in "Lock and Key." —Mrs. Upſdell, formerly Miſs Palmer, made a ſecond eſſay, and excited ſome expectation of future improvement.

Mr. Colman's "Heir at Law," was performed on the 15th of July; in which, though the ſituations may be comic, yet neither is the plot intereſting nor the characters original, unleſs we except that of Dr. Pangloſs; its evident ſimila-

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rity to Morton's "Cure for the Heart Ache," induced ſome ſuſpicion among the critics of Mr. Colman's literary integrity in this production.

The play of the "Italian Monk," dramatiſed from one of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels by Mr. Boden, in a manner honourable to his talents as a writer, was performed on the 15th of Auguſt, with no mean ſhare of applauſe and ſucceſs, and which was more owing to its own merit, than to any adventitious aid from the theatre.—On the following night Mrs. Atkins, from Bath, and ſince engaged at Covent-Garden, appeared in the part of Roſina. She is a pupil of Rauzzini. Her voice, if not powerful, is yet perfect, and uncommonly ſweet and melodious, and is regulated by a very accurate ear; as an actreſs, ſhe is much on a level with the generality of ſingers who are ſeldom qualified for any appearance out of the orcheſtra.—"The Iriſh Tar," was performed for a benefit;—Miſs Stuart appeared in Harriet, in the "Guardian,"—The theatre cloſed on the 16th: but a play was performed on the next night for the benefit of Mr. Waldron; and on the 28th, Mrs. Jordan played the Country Girl for the benefit of the Dowager Lady Perrot.

The ſeaſon of 1797-8, commenced at Drury-Lane on the 19th of September, with the "School for Scandal" and the "Children in the Wood." Mrs. Jordan was the repreſentative of Lady Teazle, in the room of Miſs Farren; but to Mrs. Jordan's conception or performance of that part we could never give our tribute of praiſe.—Several judicious improvements, and to a great extent

extent alſo, had been made during the vacation; nor had the ornamental part been unattended to. —Mrs. Walcot, from Edinburgh, appeared in Mrs. Rigid, as ſucceſſor to Mrs. Hopkins, and as no inadequate repreſentative of her characters.

The "Chimney Corner," was the firſt dramatic novelty of the ſeaſon, the muſic of which was attributed to Kelly; in this piece Maſter Elliot, who had been heard with pleaſure at the Oratorios, performed for the firſt time, and ſung with much taſte.—Miſs Humphreys played Lady Emily, in the "Heireſs;"—Miſs Biggs performed Widow Brady, in the "Iriſh Widow," with much applauſe, and has ſince become a favourite and popular actreſs, eſpecially as a ſubſtitute for many of Mrs. Jordan's characters, in which ſhe has been very cordially received.—Miſs Dufour, merely a vocal performer, appeared in the "Haunted Tower."

The comedy of "Cheap Living," by Reynolds, was performed on the 21ſt of October; but Drury-Lane is not the ſoil in which that gentleman's exuberances will vegetate with ſucceſs.—"The Will," and the "Prize," were performed on the 27th, for the benefit of the widows, &c. of thoſe who had periſhed in Lord Duncan's action; the receipts were 432l. 12s.—"Faſt Aſleep," a very *narcotic* production, by Mr. Deputy Birch, was withdrawn after one repreſentation.—"A Trip to the Nore," a haſty effuſion of loyalty, by Franklin, was more ſucceſsful.

Miſs Goddard played the part of Letitia Hardy,

dy, for one evening; a young lady of much talent, and though not poſſeſſing the graces of Miſs Farren, yet certainly ſuperior to any repreſentation of the character we have ſince ſeen.

Mr. Archer was very favourably received in the part of Shylock.

The "Caſtle Spectre," which has proved ſo very popular a production, was brought out on the 14th of December; a drama of ſuch peculiar conſtruction as not to be criticiſed by common rules: however improbable in many of the incidents, is yet poſſeſſes ſtrong intereſt, and contains nothing unfavourable to morality.—The ſucceſs of this piece probably awakened the induſtry of the managers; for on the 16th of the following January, 1798, they produced "Blue Beard, or Female Curioſity;" the dialogue by Mr. Colman, and the muſic by Kelly; the former of which has been as much cenſured as the latter has been applauded. As a ſplendid exhibition it was certainly worth notice, and did credit to the taſte of its conductors.

In the early part of the ſeaſon it would ſeem that managers were as induſtrious in obtruding new performers, whoſe names were never afterwards heard of, as they were of afterwards in producing new pieces to fill up the vacuities in the treaſury. On the 25th of January, the comedy of "Knave or Not," by Mr. Holcroft, was acted for the firſt time:—it was indeed very *coldly*, though we cannot ſay *candidly* received; and the opinion of it ſhall be given in the words of a critic whom

whom we cannot ſuſpect of partiality on the occaſion:

"This comedy has both merits and defects. The characters are ſtrongly drawn and well ſupported. The drift of the piece is alſo favourable to virtue; but the ſatire is rather that of Junenal than Horace, and hardly that of the comic muſe. In the grave ſcenes the language is vigorous and animated, but the comic ones want ſprightlineſs and elegance.—As a performance having a tendency to make mankind diſatisfied with each other by the gloomy views it gives of human nature, the cold reception it met with is accounted for.

Miſs Molini, ſaid to be a pupil of Mrs. Jordan's, made her appearance in the part of Peggy, in the "Country Girl," and was favourably received.

The "Stranger," altered from Kotzebue, was performed on the 24th of March;—the alteration is made with judgement; the ſpirit of the original is preſerved, while the extravagancies of the German dramatiſt are carefully ſuppreſſed.—The play was particularly diſtinguiſhed by the excellent acting of Mrs. Siddons and Mr. Kemble.

The benefit of Mr. King, on the 18th of May, returned Mr. Smith to the houſe, where he performed the part of Charles, in the "School for Scandal," after an abſence of ten years; and it was generally thought that his performance was not inferior to that of his beſt days.

There is little left to notice during the remainder

der of the ſeaſon, but the production of a number of thoſe muſhroom-like works, which appear on the benefit night of a performer, and are ſeldom again heard of; we might except a whimſical ſequel to "Sylveſter Daggerwood," which has often been repeated.—The ſeaſon cloſed with the uſual return of thanks:—In the latter part it had proved a favourable one to the proprietors.

Covent-Garden theatre opened on the 18th of September, with the "Firſt part of Henry IV." and the "Farm Houſe." Mrs. Litchfield appeared in the character of Marianne, in the "Dramatiſt," which ſhe ſupported with much vivacity. Mrs. Coates made her firſt appearance in Clarinda, in the "Suſpicious Huſband."—Mr. Wheatley came forward in Laertes; and Mr. Clarke, (now at Drury-Lane,) in Mr. Page, in the "Merry Wives of Windſor."

On the 6th of October, Mrs. Abingdon, after ſix years abſence, appeared in the character of Beatrice, introduced by an addreſs written by Colman, and delivered by Mr. Murray, it is needleſs to ſay that ſhe was well received;—ſhe certainly played with a ſpirit and propriety little to be expected at her advanced period of life, and ſhe continued to perform a number of thoſe characters in which ſhe had been diſtinguiſhed in earlier days.

A rage for *old women* ſeemed to be the manager's characteriſtic in this ſeaſon;—the next *novelty* was Madame Mara, as the repreſentative of Polly, in the "Beggar's Opera," and though her figure, countenance, and foreign accent, and

eſpecially her *years* were repugnant to every idea of the character, yet the ſweetneſs and flexibility of her voice, and the beautiful variations which ſhe gave to moſt of the airs, not only procured toleration, but a conſiderable degree of applauſe.—She afterwards performed Roſetta, in "Love in a Village," to which the ſame remarks are applicable.

Miſs Betterton, from Bath, appeared for the firſt time in Elvina, in "Percy:" but in tragedy this lady has been leſs ſucceſsful than in moſt of the light comic characters which ſhe has ſince aſſumed:—if her talents are well cultivated, ſhe promiſes to become an intereſting actreſs.—The next on record is Mrs. Spencer, (formerly Miſs Campion, and now Mrs. Pope,) who was introduced to the public in the part of Monimia, in the "Orphan;" the ſtage had long been in want of an actreſs who could impreſs on the audience the character of gentleneſs, diffidence, or artleſs innocence:—in this light the lady has been eminently ſucceſsful.—Miſs Wheatley, ſiſter to the perſon who played Laertes, was brought out, as a vocal performer, in "Abroad and at Home," and ſtill continues a decent ſinger.

On the 23d, Mr. H. Johnſton, from Edinburgh, for the firſt time, and Mrs. Crawford, who had quitted the ſtage for thirteen years, appeared in the parts of Douglas and Lady Randolph. The merits of the gentleman had been ſo ſtrongly anticipated, though now pretty accurately eſtimated; and time had ſo viſibly laid his hands on the lady's perſon, that though the performance might

might be pardoned it could not be commended.—Among the number of *firſt* appearances we had almoſt forgotten Mr. Betterton, and Miſs Sims; and among much that might as well be forgotten, was a muſical farce, partly by Mrs. Inchbald, called, "An Eſcape into Priſon."

"Falſe Impreſſions," from the pen of Mr. Cumberland, was favourably received, but more ſo from the excellence of the acting than from any intrinſic merit iu the piece. To relieve the dulneſs of ſentimental comedy, the managers of this theatre were very aſſiduous in bringing forward *ſpectacles* and ballets:—On the evening following the firſt repreſentation of the above comedy they preſented "The Round Tower;" the ſcenery and decorations of which did credit to the taſte of its directors.—A farcical production of O'Keefe's, named "All for St. Paul's," ſeemed more calculated to ridicule than commemorate that intereſting proceſſion.—"Harlequin Quixote, or the Magic Arm," ſerved to amuſe the children during the holidays, but was inferior to many of theſe eccentricities.—A Mrs. Johnſon was received with ſome applauſe in the part of Zaphira in "Barbaroſſa."

Mr. Morton's comedy of "Secrets worth Knowing," was performed on January 11, 1798, in which all the leading performers of the houſe were introduced to give effect to the piece: not that it was deſtitute of thoſe various merits which mark Mr. Morton's dramas; though by graſping the whole ſtrength of the theatrical corps he ſeemed to have cramped his own genius.

A tragedy under the name of "England Preſerved," the work of Mr. Watſon, Firſt Clerk in the Iriſh Houſe of Commons, was performed *once*, on the 9th of February, and the emoluments given in aid of the voluntary contribution for the defence of the country; the pit and boxes were raiſed in price; and the houſe, though not very crowded, was however brilliant. Lord Bridport, Lord Hood, and many naval commanders were preſent:—the performers entered into a very handſome ſubſcription.

"The Maid of Orleans," notwithſtanding the *liberality* of the manager, was not eminently ſucceſsful;—neither angelic nor infernal aſſiſtance could preſerve poor *Joan of Arc* in the public eſtimation.

The *old* gentleman was again reſorted in a farce called "The Devil of a Lover;" but the public were tired with having too much of a good thing, and both Devil and Lover were univerſally damned.—The piece was certainly too long, though it afforded whim enough for a farce of one act.—It was the production of Mr. Mourtray, a young gentleman of Cambridge, whoſe father died on the day ſubſequent to its repreſentation.

The comedy of "He's much to Blame," was received with much approbation; its object appeared to be to foſter the amiable affections, and to aid the cauſe of morality; the intereſt was conſiderable; and the ſentiments ſtrictly appropriate to the characters. This comedy was ſuppoſed to have come from the pen of Mr. Holcroft; though Mr. Fenwick was given out as the author.

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The advancing benefit ſeaſon gave birth to many petit pieces, whoſe exiſtence generally terminated with the evening. "Curioſity," a play acted for Mr. Holman's benefit, was well received, and poſſeſſed ſome merit: of the other temporary effuſions there were, "The Raft, or both Sides of the Water," "Harlequin's Return," "Forecaſtle Fun," "Blue Devils," "Voluntary Contributions," a pantomime olio, named the "Birth of Harlequin," &c. &c.

From this liſt we may venture to except the "Eccentric Lovers," by Mr. Cumberland: it was indeed a haſty performance, and rather a ſelection of detached ſcenes, than a regular drama; and the reception but little encouraging; though the indiſpoſition of Mr. Quick was aſſigned as a reaſon for its being laid on the Shelf.

The benefit of Mr. Murray introduced his daughter to the ſtage, who made her firſt appearance in Perdita, in the farce of "Florizel and Perdita:" ſhe played the part with much delicacy and propriety, and has ſince ſuſtained ſome others with applauſe. Under the judicious inſtructions of her father, ſhe promiſes to become a valuable acquiſition to the theatre.

The comic opera of "Reformed in Time," was firſt performed for the benefit of Mrs. Mountain, and has ſince been favourably received.—Maſſinger's "Baſhful Lover," with ſome alterations by Mr. Hull, was played under the name of "Diſintereſted Love." The theatre cloſed on the 7th of June, with the twenty-firſt night of "He's much to blame," and "Roſina;" in

which a young lady, we think her name is Montague, appeared for the firſt time; ſhe was favourably received, and ſeemed to poſſeſs muſical talents equal to many who have become ſtationary members of the vocal tribe.

The Hay-Market theatre opened on the 12th of June, with the "Deaf Lover," "The Battle of Hexham," and the "Blue Devils;" the latter a ſlight, flimſy performance, which had been played at Covent-Garden, with little applauſe, and which was never expected to have been tranſplanted to the ſoil of the Hay-Market.—Miſs Griffiths, a pupil of Kelly's, about fifteen years of age, was very favourably received in the part of Polly Peachum.—She was afterwards ſucceſsful in the performance of Clariſſa and Florella; though ſhe was ſometimes thrown into characters rather unſuitable to her powers.

The firſt piece intended to attract popularity was the "Inquiſitor," tranſlated from a French verſion of a German drama, and the principal incidents of which are taken from "Romeo and Juliet," but traveſtied in ſuch a manner as to produce ſome degree of ridicule. It was attributed to Mr. Holcroft, though neither that gentleman nor any other ſeemed emulous of the honour. The play was of a mournful nature, but the audience was certainly in a merry mood, and indulged in repeated burſts of laughter.

"Throw Phyſic to the Dogs." was unfavourably received, but the draft had been aukwardly compounded, otherwiſe the ingredients were not of themſelves contemptible.—A Mr. D'Arcy,

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but whoſe real name is Caird, made his appearance as Captain Greville, in the "Flitch of Bacon;" and has ſome talents in the muſical line.

"The Cambro' Britons," by Mr. Boaden, was the next novelty; and contained all the ingenuities which the ſtage admits to render a piece palatable; rivalſhip in love, proceſſions, ſpeaking ghoſts, aëriel ſpirits, and a mixture of ſerious and comic characters, together with ſong, dance, and ſpectacle. It is not deſtitute of poetical effort, but both the language and the ſentiments are highly inflated.

"Falſe and True," a muſical piece in three acts, and apparently of foreign manufacture, was attributed to Mr. Moutray, author of the "Devil of a Lover;" it ſhewed ſomewhat more of dramatic experience than his former production; and though there was little of novelty either in the character or the fable, yet the piece was not devoid of humour and intereſt, and was received with applauſe.

Mrs. H. Johnſton, wife of Mr. H. Johnſton, of Covent-Garden theatre, made her firſt appearance on the Hay-Market ſtage in the part of Ophelia, in which ſhe gave much ſatisfaction, and was very favourably received.—A ſiſter of Miſs Biggs, of Drury-Lane, appeared for Johnſtone's benefit, but report did not ſpeak very highly of her talents. Charles Kemble played Shylock, in which there was ſomething to applaud, and room enough for amendment. The theatre cloſed on the 14th, with "Falſe and True," "Two Strings to your Bow." and the "Children

dren in the Wood;" when Mr. Barrymore returned the uſual thanks.

Among the theatrical incidents of the year 1798, we muſt not omit the mention of the death of Mr. JOHN PALMER, of Drury-Lane theatre, at Liverpool, on the 2d of Auguſt, in the 57th year of his age.

Few men, even of his profeſſion, had experienced more of the verſatility of fortune, and of the checkered ſcenes of life, than John Palmer. The ſituation of Mr. Palmer's parents did not afford him many advantages of education: his father was many years pit-door keeper at Drury-Lane houſe; but this circumſtance afforded the ſon an eaſy acceſs to theatrical amuſements, and an introduction to the ſtage, though his early efforts were far from promiſing, and his progreſs towards excellence was very ſlow.—His firſt connection was with Foote, and it is ſtated in various memoirs of Mr. PALMER that he made his appearance in the month of May, 1762, in Foote's Lecture on Oratory: his next performance on record was Buck, in the "Engliſhman in Paris," for his father's benefit: Mr. Palmer's chief qualities for the ſtage at this period, were a good perſon and a competent ſhare of confidence. After ſome country excurſions, he had the *happineſs* to be engaged by Mr. Garrick, at the *liberal* ſalary of twenty ſhilling per week; this was in the ſeaſon of 1764:—at the end of which, while a performer at Norwich, he married the lady who died only a few months before him; a marriage that for ſome time only involved him in new difficulties,

ties, for the relatives of his wife became his moſt inveterate enemies.

It was not 'till the year 1768, that Mr. Palmer ſeemed to attain high degree of public favour: he was a ſecond time engaged by Garrick at 30s. per week, for which (ſuch was Palmer's attachment to the little man,) he gave up an engagement he had made with Beard, at Covent-Garden, for double that ſum; and he had alſo the mortification to be employed in very ſubordinate characters.

On the death of his name-ſake, ſon-in-law to Mrs. Pritchard, Palmer had the good fortune to receive Garrick's approbation for playing the part of Harcourt, in the "Country Girl," and which he undertook on an emergency:—and on the death of the perſon alluded to, our Palmer ſucceeded to moſt of his parts. When Powell quitted Drury-Lane, in conſequence of his having purchaſed a ſhare in Covent-Garden theatre, many of his parts were alſo allotted to Palmer; and by the ſudden loſs of Holland, theſe were ſtill farther multiplied. He now began to appear in a more reſpectable light; few men had indeed a wider range of characters; and by his unremitting induſtry and application, he arrived at what might be called a ſtate of excellence.—In the ſummer vacations he performed at the Hay-Market; and in both ſituations was long and deſervedly a favourite with the town.

In 1785, he laid the firſt ſtone of the Royalty theatre, a circumſtance that conſtituted a principal event in his life, and finally proved a ſource of much calamity: whether he was deceived by the

the ſubſcribers, cannot be ſaid, but certainly many of his connections were deceived by him.—The houſe was opened in June, 1787, but without any legal authority; and the plan being oppoſed by the managers of the winter theatres, after an ineffectual ſtruggle, in which he added to the pecuniary difficulties he had already been involved in, he was obliged to abandon the ſcheme, and return to his former ſtation at Drury-Lane. From this period, until the cloſe of his life, nothing of importance occured; he continued to perform his duty with as much regularity as his embarraſſments would permit, and received the applauſe he was entitled to.

So much was poor Palmer harraſſed by thoſe moſt deteſtable of all, becauſe legalized harpies, unprincipled attornies, that he was once on the eve of quitting his native country, and throwing himſelf and his family on the hoſpitality of the American ſhore; but this was prevented by his affairs being put into a train of accommodation.—His proſpects again began to brighten up, and a few days before his death, he was appointed to the management of Drury-Lane, on the reſignation of Mr. Wroughton.

The verſatility of Mr. Palmer's talents was very uncommon; he performed in tragedy equally well as in comedy, and in many parts of each with ſuperior excellence. His loſs forms an æra in the hiſtory of the ſtage, and he left a vacancy which apparently will be long unfilled.

Mr. Palmer had been engaged to perform at Liverpool; he had dined on the 29th of July with

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ſeveral perſons belonging to the theatre, and appeared to be rather low ſpirited; which was attributed to the recent loſs of his wife and ſon; but on Wedneſday, the firſt of Auguſt, he performed Young Wilding in the "Liar," with his accuſtomed vivacity. The next day he appeared again dejected; nor could the efforts of his friends rouſe him from the melancholy in which he appeared to be ſunk: in the evening he appeared in the "Stranger," and in the two firſt acts exerted himſelf with great effect, but in the third, as he was about to reply to the queſtion of Baron Steinfort, relative to his children, he appeared unuſually agitated; and after uttering the words,

"Oh God! God!

"There is *another* and a *better* world,"

he inſtantly fell, heaved a convulſive ſigh, and expired.—The following paragraph is copied from an account of the death of Mr. Palmer, ſaid to be written by Mr. Whitfield, who performed Baron Steinfort in the play of the "Stranger," and was with him on the ſtage when the melancholy event took place.

"A few minutes before he was called to go on for the ſcene in which he died, I aſked him how he was? he anſwered very poorly. From that moment I have reaſon to believe he did not ſpeak till he went on the ſtage for the laſt time. He was more collected and correct through the whole, in regard to the words and the buſineſs, but more energetic and loud in the deſcription of his falſe friend, than when he performed the part before.

before. His voice ſeemed to crack, and, at the end of the ſpeech, he ſtruck his head with great force, then croſſed me, from my right hand to my left. The two ſhort ſpeeches he uttered after were given rather faintly, but not more ſo than appeared perfectly conſonant to the ſituation of the character. After I put the queſtion, "*Why did not you keep your children, they might have amuſed in many a dreary hour?*" he turned to reply, and, for the ſpace of about ten ſeconds, he pauſed as if waiting for the prompter to give him the word, and put out his right hand, as if going to take hold of mine. It dropt, as to ſupport his fall, but it had no power; in that inſtant he fell, but not at full length, he couched in falling, ſo that his head did not ſtrike the ſtage with great violence, he never breathed after. I think I may venture to ſay he died without a pang."

Every medical aſſiſtance was immediately procured, and exerted, until every hope of recovery had vaniſhed, and the body was carried away on a bier.—Mr. Aickin endeavoured, but was unable, to communicate the ſad information to the the audience, which was done by Mr. Incledon, and the houſe was immediately cleared.—On the Monday following, being the 6th of Auguſt, the remains of Mr. Palmer were interred at Walton, a village in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, attended by all the gentlemen of the theatre, and a number of others belonging to the town. The grave was ſeven feet deep, dug in a rock. The coffin was oak, covered with black, and ſimply inſcribed with the name of its poſſeſſor.

Drury-

Drury-Lane Theatre opened for the ſeaſon of 1798-9, on the 15th of September, with the "Stranger," and the "Citizen," for the benefit of the orphan family of the late Mr. Palmer. In the former, Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, and in the latter, Mr. Banniſter and Mrs. Jordan, performed their uſual parts, and the houſe was every where crowded.—The receipts were ſtated at upwards of 800l.—Mr. Aickin ſucceeded Mr. Wroughton as acting manager.—Mr. Biggs, (who is ſince dead,) brother to Miſs Biggs of this theatre, made his firſt appearance in Scrub, in the "Beaux Stratagem;" he met with much applauſe, and was allowed to poſſeſs conſiderable merit.

The "Out-laws," a muſical entertainment by Mr. Franklin, was received with conſiderable applauſe.

Mr. Powell, from Norwich, where he had been for ſome years the chief ornament of the theatre, made his appearance on the 20th of October, in the parts of Don Felix, in the "Wonder," and Young Wilding, in the "Liar;" Mr. Powell certainly had a very correct conception of the former part; but the ſtupenduous appearance of the houſe, ſo diſſimilar to a country theatre, and the apprenhenſions that naturally took poſſeſſion of his mind, ſeemed to check that ardour which we expect in the zealous and love-ſick Spaniard, actuated by a variety of contending paſſions:—yet in many inſtances Mr. Powell diſplayed maſterly ſtrokes of feeling and nature.—But his Liar afforded a happy opportunity of diſ-

playing his talents; it had as much ſpirit, eaſe, flippancy and effect as could poſſibly be thrown into the character; and the public from that moment conſidered him as a very uſeful and reſpectable addition to the company of Drury-Lane; though, from what motive we cannot gueſs, he has not been brought ſo forward as we think he juſtly deſerves.

"The Captive of Spilburgh," by Mr. Prince Hoare, was performed on the 14th of November.—It is adapted from a ſtory in Madame Genlis's Adelaide and Theodore; but though not devoid of intereſt, it is rather too gloomy for an afterpiece.—The decorative part alſo brought "Blue Beard" too much to the recollection of the audience.

Mr. Cory, a gentleman poſſeſſed of many ſtage requiſites, made his firſt appearance in Reginald, in the "Caſtle Spectre."—Miſs Stevens played the part of Polly, in the "Beggar's Opera," as her firſt theatrical attempt, and altogether gave a very favourable portrait of this celebrated character. Her voice is muſical and of great compaſs; her figure boaſts no elegance, and her face little beauty; but ſhe paſſes very decently in muſical characters.

"A Word for Nature," a comedy by Mr. Cumberland, lingered through five nights; but Mr. Cumberland writes ſo much, and his unreviſed productions are ſo haſtily brought forward, that we cannot wonder they are ſo ſeldom calculated to excite approbation.—There was nothing to offend, and certainly nothing to intereſt.

"Aurelio

"Aurelio and Miranda," dramatized from the celebrated novel of the "Monk," by Mr. Boaden, was performed for ſix nights, and probably will never be revived:—it was not deſtitute of dramatic merit; but thoſe parts which were moſt intereſting, or at leaſt, moſt affected the imagination, in the novel were charms neceſſarily omitted in the repreſentation: the beauties of the original could not be transferred to the ſtage, where probability and morality were to be ſupported at the expence of the lively and inventive fancy of the original writer. The play was to have been named "*Ambroſio*," but this was changed by the command of the *Licenſer*, for what reaſon even common ſenſe cannot diſcover:—a licenſer of plays may be a *well meaning* man, but we have many inſtances of partiality and ſtupidity where *taſte*, to ſay no more, is too often ſacrificed. The change of name could in no degree obviate the ſuppoſed licentiouſneſs of the "Monk," which has been ſuch a fruitful ſource of declamation for the tongues and pens of the patronized French Jeſuits in this country, the enmity of whom it has ſo much excited by an ample diſplay of prieſtly hypocriſy and the horrid impieties practiſed in convents and monaſteries.

"Feudal Times" was the next production, from the copartnerſhip of Meſſrs. Colman and Kelly, aſſiſted by the powers of the painter, the machiniſt, the muſician, and the taylor.—Miſs Edmead made her firſt appearance in the "Jealous Wife," and was favourably received.

The "Secret," a comedy by Mr. Morris,

was performed on the 2d of March; though conducted in an irregular manner, it is a very entertaining, well written play, ſeldom devoid of intereſt, and poſſeſſing ſome ſhare of originality; the moral is commendable, and the dialogue ſprightly and familiar.—"The Twins," a new farce, by the author of the "Caſtle Spectre," was performed for the benefit of Mr. Banniſter, and was calculated to excite a laugh.

Miſs Dixon, a pupil of Mrs. Crouch's, was introduced to give a ſpecimen of her vocal talents in the part of Beda, and which ſeemed very promiſing.

The "Eaſt Indian," a comedy by Mr. Lewis, was played for the benefit of Mrs. Jordan:—it has ſince appeared with corrections, but will never obtain an eſtabliſhment on the ſtage; and yet, though it brings ſome other plays to recollection, there is a great deal of merit in it as a drama; the characters are intereſting, the plot is conducted with ſkill, ſome of the ſcenes are ſtrongly affecting, and the writing is beautiful.

"The Caſtle of Montveal," a tragedy by Mr. Whalley, and his firſt dramatic production; but notwithſtanding the beſt aids of acting its duration was very tranſitory.—"Trials of the Heart" was played for the benefit of Mr. King, but prov. a very dull performance.—Miſs De Camp's "Firſt Faults" were ſubmitted to public notice at her own benefit; and the Firſt Faults of a young lady, ſo generally eſteemed as Miſs De Camp, were not ſeverely ſcrutinized, and were very pardonable.

—Mr.

—Mr. Talbot, from Dublin, played Young Mirabel in the "Inconſtant."

On the 23d. of May the doors of Drury-Lane theatre were ſhut to prepare for the magnificent drama of "Pizzaro," which was performed on the following evening, but was not finiſhed until twelve o'clock at night.—Of the faſcinating attractions of this uncommonly popular drama the public are well informed; and in ſuch a manner has it made its way to the heart, that the *fiftieth* repreſentation was attended by as crowded an audience as even the firſt.—It was the means of keeping Drury-Lane theatre open until the 4th of July, having been performed thirty-one times.

Covent-Garden opened on the 17th of September, 1798.9, with "Hamlet," and the farce of "Botheration;"—in the former, Mrs. H. Johnſton was received with much applauſe in Ophelia. —Mr. Manſell made his firſt appearance as Young Marlow, in "She Stoops to Conquer," but without much claim to notice. Mr. Emery, from York, played Frank Oatland, in the "Cure for the Heart Ache," and Lovegold in the "Miſer," in a very able manner.—Miſs Mitchell, who is ſince dead, came out in Yarico. Mrs. Johnſon, from the American theatre, played Lady Townly with ſome ſucceſs; and continues in ſome degree of reputation.—Mrs. Mills, from York, appeared i Sophia, in the "Road to Ruin," and in Little Pickle, in the "Spoild Child," in which ſhe obtained unqualified praiſe.—Hill, from Bath, appeared in Edwin, in "Robin Hood;" he will always be a pleaſing, though never a great, ſinger.

The popular production of "Lover's Vows" was repreſented on the 11th of October; in conformity to German Genius, from which it originates, it poſſeſſes more of tragedy than comedy; it certainly raiſes the feelings occaſionally to an uncommon ſenſibility; a procedure that is characteriſtic of the writers of that country; but the impreſſion ſeems leſs laſting than what we experience from many of the genuine productions of the Britiſh Muſe. Its moral tendency has been the ſubject of controverſy, its applauſe has however always been great.

"A Day at Rome," the firſt dramatic offspring of a Mr. Smith, was injudiciouſly added to the foregoing piece; the contraſt was ſo viſible, that it experienced more ſeverity than perhaps would otherwiſe have been the caſe.—"The Genoeſe Pirate," a ballet of action, introduced Mrs. Wybrow to the ſtage of this theatre,—a performer of much grace and agility.—"The Mouth of the Nile," a ſing-ſong, temporary effuſion of loyalty, by T. Dibdin, was favourably received.—Mrs. Chapman, a lady of pleaſing figure and good voice, appeared for the firſt time in Moggy, in the "Highland Reel."

The opera of "Ramah Droog, or Wine does Wonders," by Mr. Cobb, ſeemed chiefly intended for a vehicle of magnificent ſcenery, ſplendid proceſſion, and pleaſing muſic; yet the fable is not devoid of intereſt, and the conduct of it keeps attention alive. In this performance Miſs Waters, a pupil of Mazzinghi's, made her firſt appearance; her voice is powerful, but her manner is too much

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in the Italian ſtyle.—The "Jew and the Doctor," a farce by Dibdin, is a very humourous production, and continues to be a favourite.

"Laugh when you Can," a comedy by Reynold's, certainly produced the effect which the author intended, of exciting much mirth; the fable is trifling, but there are ſome pathetic ſcenes which produce conſiderable effect.

"Albert and Adelaide, or the Victim of Conſtancy" has its ſcource in the ſame ſtory as "Feudal Times," performed at the other houſe; the muſic was good, and the decorations pretty.

A Mr. Turner appeared in Macbeth; and it is ſufficient to mention the circumſtance: Mrs. Johnſon, at the ſame time, performed Lady Macbeth in a manner that increaſed the favorable opinion the public had entertained of her talents.

On the 17th of December, 1798, the "Jealous Wife," with "High Life Below Stairs," were acted at the Hay-Market, for the benefit of Mr. Lacey: Mrs. Abingdon, on this benevolent occaſion, performed the part of Mrs. Oakley, and and many of the ladies and gentlemen of Drury-Lane theatre alſo contributed their aſſiſtance.

Mrs. Atkins, whom we have already noticed on her coming out at the Hay-Market theatre, made her firſt appearance at Covent-Garden in the part of Roſina;—her talents were improved, and ſhe was well received.

Mr. Holman's comedy of the "Votary of Wealth," performed on the 12th of January, 1799, was more entitled to reſpect for its moral tendency, than for any pretenſion to novelty of characters, which

which however are accurately diſcriminated, and judiciouſly contraſted. Many of the ſentiments are expreſſed with energy and elegance.

A new pantomime, "The Magic Oak," ſerved to amuſe the great babies for a conſiderable time; and certainly poſſeſſed as much merit as moſt productions of this nature.

"Five Thouſand a Year" was performed for the benefit of Mr. Lewis; it is a comedy of three acts, by Mr. Dibdin, and far from being one of his beſt compoſitions, but it was evidently put together in haſte.—"The Old Cloathesman," ſaid to be Holcroft's, was performed a few nights. —The muſic by Atwood and Parke were praiſeworthy.

The "Birth Day," adapted from the German, alſo by Dibdin, is intitled to better notice:—it is rather an affecting, than an impaſſioned, drama; the incidents are well managed, natural and judicious; the morality of the piece is commendable; the characters, originally Engliſh ones, ſpirited and correct, and the language ſufficiently pure to be undeſerving of cenſure.

"The Count of Burgundy," another of Kotzebue's plays, altered from a tranſlation by Miſs Plumtre, by Mr. Pope, was performed for his benefit, but diſregarded afterwards.

A little two-act opera, called the "Princeſs of Georgia," made up by the Margravine of Anſpach, was performed for Fawcett's benefit.

"What is She?" a comedy, ſaid to be the production of a Lady, was made the vehicle of ſome good, ſtrong, and ſatyrical writing, yet

ſometimes

ſometimes ſentimental; but the talents of the writer, whether lady or gentleman, ſeem better adapted for novels than for dramas.

"The Horſe and Widow," a whimſical little production of Kotzebue's, altered by Dibdin, was favourably received.—A Mr. Lee appeared in Richard, but with little claim to notice:—The Younger Miſs De Camp played Sophia, in "The Road to Ruin," with better proſpect, and Miſs Murray performed Juliet in a ſtile of genuine ſimplicity, that afforded high expectation.

Among a variety of little pieces, got up for a temporary purpoſes, and which were immediately forgotten, the farce of "Fortune's Frolic," by Mr. Allingham, ſeemed entitled to a better fate. —"The Way to Get Married," with "The Virgin Unmaſked," in which Mrs. Jordan played Lucy, were performed for the benefit of Mr. Follet's widow, and produced 460l. this was on the firſt of June, and on the 10th the houſe cloſed with the uſual addreſs of thanks from Mr. Lewis.

On the 15th of June, 1799, the Hay-Market theatre opened with "Peeping Tom," "The Village Lawyer," and "Family Diſtreſs," adapted from Kotzebue. The latter never attained any great degree of public favour, though well performed; it was certainly reproachable on the ſcorce of great improbability.

"The Caſtle of Sorento," a muſical entertainment, taken from a French piece called "The Priſoner," was more ſucceſsful; and was received with great applauſe. The acting was excellent, and

and particularly the character ſuſtained by Fawcett.

"Sighs, or the Daughter," *another* production of Kotzebue's, altered by Mr. Prince Hoare; and notwithſtanding the objections to which the fable is originally liable, was ſo far heightened in comic effect, that aſſiſted by good acting, it was received with approbation.—"Gander Hall," by Mr. Franklin," did not meet with a cordial reception.

"The Red Croſs Knights," altered from Schiller's celebrated play of the "Robbers," by Mr. Holman, whoſe labors on this occaſion were not attended with all the ſucceſs they deſerved.—The theatre cloſed with this performance on the 14th of September, with an addreſs of thanks by Mr. Fawcett, the acting manager.

Some *firſt* appearances took place in the courſe of this ſhort, and not favourable ſeaſon, but ſcarcely worth recording.

The winter campaign opened at Drury-Lane, on the 17th of September, 1799, with the "Caſtle Spectre," and the "Prize:" The houſe had been throughly cleaned, and a ſtatute of Garrick, ſimilar to that erected in Weſtminſter Abbey, has been placed in the Coffee-room.—On the firſt performance of "Hamlet," Miſs Biggs was the ſubſtitute of Mrs. Jordan; the claim of ſuperiority has been much conteſted among the critics.—Miſs Campbell, from Stephen Kemble's company at Newcaſtle, played, for the firſt time on this ſtage, the part of Fanny, in the "Clandeſtine Marriage,"

and

and gave proof of talents which time may render valuable.

Mr. Raymond, from the Dublin theatre, made his firſt appearance here, in the part of Oſmond, in "The Caſtle Spectre." His figure is good and well proportioned; his voice powerful, yet managed with ſkill; and his countenance expreſſive:—when diveſted of ſome peculiarities, he will be an uſeful addition to the corps of this houſe.

"The Embarkation," intended to commemorate the Dutch expedition, was almoſt *out of time*; it was, however, pretty favourably received.

"The Pavillion," the author of which has reduced a very charming ſtory, pregnant with dramatic effect, to a mere inanity, was fully condemned on its ſecond repreſentation; and when again brought forward under the title of the "Ring," experienced a ſimilar fate.

"The Eaſt Indian," a comedy by Mr. Lewis, already noticed, was again performed with ſome alterations; and much praiſe was due to Mr. Kemble, and Miſs Biggs; but of the moral tendency of this drama we cannot approve:—the conduct of Zorayda can never be mentioned without the ſevereſt marks of condemnation, though ſhe is pourtrayed by the author in the moſt amiable and engaging point of view.

The revival of "Pizarro" and "Lodoiſka," proved ſo ſucceſsful that few other novelties were attended to:—a tragedy by Mr. Pye, entitled "Adelaide," and certainly poſſeſſing much dramatic merit, was in favour with the public at the

period

period of our quitting this ſhort hiſtory of the Stage.

Covent-Garden theatre had again taken precedence of the other houſe, by opening on the 16th of September, with the comedy of "Laugh when you Can," and "Roſina;"—the houſe had been new painted and decorated; but though the endeavours of the proprietors to pleaſe the public deſerve commendation, yet their taſte in the preſent inſtance has been much cenſured; and by another ſeaſon a complete change muſt take place in the painting.

"The Farm Houſe" brought forward Mrs. Dibdin in the part of Aura, in which ſhe diſplayed ſpirit and vivacity ſufficient to draw forth a conſiderable ſhare of applauſe.

"The Naval Pillar," another offering at the faſhionable ſhrine of loyalty, conſtituted an agreeable Olio: it was one of Dibdin's productions, conſiſting of ſong, dance, &c. and had a run of ſeveral nights.

"Management," a comedy by Mr. Reynolds, was the next novelty, in which the author has happily blended humour and pathos,—but the events are improbable, and the comic parts are farcical; theſe, however, are trifles in the way of Mr. Reynolds; whoſe whimſicality, for wit it cannot be called, generally carries him through with ſucceſs; and in this inſtance met with a favourable reception.

Mr. Macartney appeared in Lyſimachus, in "Alexander the Great;"—and Mr. Tomkins in Lord Aimworth, in the "Maid of the Mill:"

but

but little calculated for critical remark.—Mrs. St. Ledger, from Dublin, played Alicia, in "Jane Shore;" but a very coarſe and diſcordant voice operated much to the injury of good theatric talents.—Mrs. Higgenſon, formerly Mrs. Cuſſans, came forward as Julia, in the "Myſteries of the Caſtle:" here, too, voice was the moſt material objection, though ariſing from a different cauſe: the voice of Mrs. Higgenſon is ſweet and melodious, but too weak to be heard with effect. Both theſe ladies had ſtrong claims on the ſcore of perſonal appearance, though of rather oppoſite deſcriptions.

"The Turnpike Gate," a muſical farce by Mr. Knight, of this theatre, though ſlight in its texture, was highly pleaſing in its effect; and the muſic deſerves the praiſe it received.

"Another and another ſtill ſucceeds!"—for another Germanic production obtrudes itſelf on our notice: it is entitled and called "The Wiſe Man of the Eaſt." altered from Kotzebue, by Mrs. Inchbald. This is a ſad monument of the erroneous judgement of the managers; for although Mr. Harris gave the fair Editor 500l. for her verſion of Kotzebue, there is much doubt whether it ever brought ſuch a ſum into his treaſury. The performance, though after repeated, never obtained a favourable reception.

A pantomime, named "The Volcano, or the Rival Harlequins," was the next production, in order to pleaſe the holiday people, but it certainly was not the beſt of the kind.

The laſt production we have to notice was a grand dramatic ſpectacle under the title of "Joanna." the work of Mr. Cumberland; the plot is taken from that ſeemingly inexhauſtible fountain of plots and plays, the German Kotzebue; it ſeemed intended to vie with the "Pizarro" of the other houſe, but of which it is indeed but a faint ſhadow.—Mr. Lewis is now not only the acting-manager, but a proprietor of Covent-Garden theatre; though, during the preſent ſeaſon, his *management* has not been remarkably ſucceſsful.

In taking leave of our readers, we wiſh to obſerve, that, in all our ſtatements, we have aimed at correct impartiality, and as far as an abridgement like this would permit, we have embraced every point of intelligence relative to our ſcheme.—In enumerating the dramatic productions, we have in moſt inſtances confined ourſelves to thoſe plays which have been ſucceſsful. ſhould any inaccuracy or miſ-ſtatement meet the public eye, (and we truſt that, if ever, ſuch a circumſtance will, in this little work, but rarely occur,) we hope for an indulgence neceſſary to the want of infallibility in this and every undertaking.—Our authorities have, in general, been of the moſt reſpectable claſs, and by comparing thoſe together we have, with the addition of perſonal connection and experience, founded a work which, whatever may be its reception from the public, is ſubmitted to them with the higheſt ſentiments of deference and reſpect.

ADDENDA.

ADDENDA.

SINCE this little work was ready for Preſs, the hiſtory of a diſagreeable altercation that had taken place between the Proprietors and ſome of the Performers of *Covent Garden* Theatre has been laid before the public.—Since Mr. LEWIS has become a Proprietor of that theatre, ſome arrangements have been made, perhaps ſtrictly juſtifiable in themſelves, but yet of ſuch a nature as to excite diſcontent among the performers; which has at length riſen to an avowed oppoſition to the meaſure. Previous to the commencement of the preſent ſeaſon, they received an official notice from Mr. Hughes, the Treaſurer, ſtating, "that in future the charge of the Benefit would be 160l. excluſive of the uſual charge of ſupernumeraries."—On the opening of the ſeaſon they found that the uſe of their orders had been reſtrained in a very unuſual manner; and that a number of new reſtrictions, individually of a

trivial nature, had taken place:—a committee of eight perſons was therefore appointed to wait on Mr. Harris, and communicate to him the ſentiments of the majority of the performers, who wiſh ſuch arrangements might be made as to prevent all future difference of ſentiment between the proprietors and performers.—The latter ſeemed chiefly to object to the additional charge of 20l. on benefit nights; and to the fine of 30l. on the refuſal of a character.—The memorandums were ſigned by Meſſrs. Munden, J. Johnſtone, Incledon, H. E. Johnſton, Pope, Fawcett, Holman, and Knight.

In reply, Mr. Harris contended that *orders* were a gratuitous indulgence on the part of the theatre; but his opponents ſay, that he had formerly admitted them to be the *privilege* of the actors: he acknowledged, however, a diſpoſition to make that indulgence as accommodating as might be.—The charge on benefit nights, the proprietors contend, has ever been regulated by the actual expenditure of each night of performance, and the preſent charge is much under the nightly expence: the enlargement of the theatre, and the advancement of the price are ſaid to be much more than an equivalent to the performers for the unavoidable increaſed charge: and that the fine for refuſing the character had been eſtabliſhed two ſeaſons ago without a murmur; and had proved of ſuch efficacy, that not a ſingle fine had been impoſed ſince the preſent ſum had been eſtabliſhed.—The Treaſurer ſtated alſo, that on an accurate calculation he found

found that the nightly expences very conſiderably exceeded the ſum of 160l.

In a ſubſequent letter addreſſed to the eight performers, by Mr. Hughes, the Treaſurer, he reduces the queſtion to this ſimple ground.—"Whether the theatre ſhall be governed and controlled by eight performers, each of them receiving in one ſeaſon, on an average of 760l. per annum, excluſive of his ſummer, and other private emoluments, ſick or well, act or not act, without riſk of any ſort?" or "whether the management, with all its detailed regulations, ſhall remain with the proprietors, whoſe profits depend altogether on conduct, good fortune, and the favour of the public?"

Whatever may have been the nature of the contracts originally entered into between proprietors and actors under the firſt Patent, it is nevertheleſs very evident that a total change of circumſtances muſt have proved ſuch contracts to be of no force as precedents for the preſent day.

A ſecond negociation was opened by Mr. Lewis in January laſt; and Mr. Cumberland undertook to become a mediator; but nothing was affected towards a pacification; and the performers at length reſolved on laying their caſe before the public, in which they have very fully entered into the diſpute. The curtailment which they have experienced in their privilege of granting orders, amounts, it would appear, almoſt to a prohibition; and there is another complaint in which they ſeem to be ſeverely treated; we mean,

the

the admiſſion of Renter's tickets on benefit nights, which muſt indiſputably operate to their injury.

On the other hand, there ſeems a hidden inclination in theſe gentlemen to conſider themſelves, or to wiſh to be conſidered rather as having an original right to a participation of the emoluments of the theatre, than as individuals and ſervants of the proprietors. The conduct of the managers or proprietors has indeed for ſome time paſt been conſidered as bordering on ſeverity: and it is very probable that recrimination has operated as a ferment to this diſpute, which is underſtood to be in a train of adjuſtment by referrence to the Lord Chamberlain, without any further appeal to the public, which certainly could not be attended with any agreeable conſequence to the proprietors of the Theatre or to the complainants.

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